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ABSTRACT

This document presents case study profiles from a study that examined three aspects of educational time: (1) quantity of time in school; (2) quality of time in school; and (3) students' use of out-of-school time. Data were derived from case studies of 14 sites that experimented with different ways of allocating time as a cornerstone of efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. All of the schools in the sample serve a substantial number of disadvantaged students. In most of the schools, the time innovations represented important changes in the organization and structure of the schools. However, in some cases, the time innovations were part of the original design of the school. As a practical matter--as well as a finding about these schools--decisions about changing the quantity of time for teaching and learning followed decisions about other kinds of changes in schools. That is, in all but two cases, teachers and principals decided to change one or more elements of the core technologies (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and concluded that changes in the allocation of time were necessary to support these changes in the quality of time. (AA)

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# EDUCATION REFORM AND THE USES OF TIME

## Volume II: Case Studies

DRAFT

Authors

September 1994

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# PREFACE

To begin to examine the myriad ways that teachers, students, and administrators have reorganized the time they spend teaching and learning, we conducted case studies of 14 sites that have experimented with different ways of allocating time as a cornerstone of efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. All of the schools in our sample serve a substantial number of disadvantaged students. Finally, the sample includes the following:

- Eight public schools and six private schools
- Three elementary schools, five middle schools, two high schools serving grades 9-12, two secondary schools serving grades 7-12, one school serving grades 1-12, and one school serving students aged 16-21
- Four residential schools
- Eleven urban schools
- Two schools that enroll only boys
- Schools with student enrollments that range from 20 (a residential school) to approximately 800 (an urban elementary school)

In most of these schools, the time innovations that attracted our attention represented important changes in the organization and structure of the schools. However, in some cases, the time innovations were part of the original design of the school. As a practical matter--as well as a finding about these schools--decisions about changing the quantity of time for teaching and learning followed decisions about other kinds of changes in schools. That is, in all but two cases, teachers and principals decided to change one or more elements of the core technologies (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) and concluded that changes in the allocation of time were necessary to support these changes in the quality of time. Data from several of our sites also lead us to the fundamental conclusion that a decision to increase the quantity of time for teaching and learning represents a hollow goal and can even work against other important changes. This suggests that quick policy fixes to extend the school day or school year for everyone would be ill-advised, particularly without a very deliberate and consensual assessment of the need to do so.

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# ALTERNATIVE MIDDLE YEARS (AMY) PROGRAM

## Overview and Context

The Alternative Middle Years (AMY) Program in the James Martin School is a magnet school located in Philadelphia. First established in 1974, AMY is a mature, alternative program available to students in grades 6-8. In 1992-93, it served about 325 students. The program's defining characteristic is ungraded (mixed-age and mixed-ability) groups in all classes except certain math courses.

The program was originally established as part of the district's desegregation effort. Student selection by lottery still maintains diversity under current desegregation guidelines. AMY's student body is more mixed than the typical middle school in this city where catchment areas tend to be racially segregated. In 1992-93, 40 percent of the students were African American, 47 percent were white, and 13 percent were Asian or Hispanic. No students were classified as limited English proficient. All students enrolled in AMY receive free or reduced-price lunch.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

Several related programmatic strategies sparked our interest in the quality of instructional time at this school. The commitment to ungraded grouping that defines the magnet program has many ramifications for other aspects of the school's structure such as the use of teachers' time, the nature of curriculum and instruction, and class size.

***Ungraded grouping.*** The academic program at AMY is on a trimester system. Three times per year, students select the courses that they will take from a catalogue, much as college students do. Most classes are open to all students in all three grades. The result of this system is a natural mixing of sixth through eighth graders with similar interests. In the classrooms, teachers at AMY do not think of students as a "sixth grader" or an "eighth grader," and, in fact, several could not readily identify students in these terms when asked by the site visitor.

*Curriculum and instruction.* Teachers at AMY develop their own courses. Although the district-mandated middle school curriculum is covered over the three years that students spend in the program, the scope and sequence is not prescribed as they are in other middle schools. One result is that the curriculum at AMY is not textbook-driven. A glance through the course descriptions in the school's catalogue reveals a heavy emphasis on laboratories, writing, and hands-on activities in all subject areas. For example, a social studies course entitled "Other People, Other Languages" involves students in writing letters to government agencies in other countries. In a language arts course entitled "Great Debates," students explore important issues in American history (e.g., ratification of the Constitution, slavery), participate in debates, and judge the forensic skills of their peers. A "Music is Communication" course includes trips to the final dress rehearsals of operas at a major theater as well as visits by opera singers in the classroom.

Classroom activities often involve extensive interactions among students of different ages, a process facilitated by vertical student grouping. Most teachers encourage students to work cooperatively in small groups, where students enthusiastically tutor their peers, and where all students can have enough time to discuss and work through problems.

*Flexible use of teacher time.* The approach to teaching and learning at AMY works because of teacher commitment and some recently formalized concessions on time-related issues from the school district and the teachers' union. Teachers in the program work under an experimental teacher's contract allowing instructors to teach more courses and have fewer preparation periods in exchange for smaller classes.

## Design Issues

AMY has been a fixture in its school district for 20 years and institutional memory on its inception is limited. At the time of its creation, planners received state approval to design a school with "experimental status." This designation waived certain state requirements in place at the time.

The original AMY brochure from the 1970s suggests that vertical grouping was initially based in part on educational research literature of the time. According to this brochure, a central tenet in AMY's philosophy is that students learn best when "flexibility is coupled with individualization," and "interaction between students is maximized." The original brochure also suggests that special staff selection procedures helped ensure commitment to the program's philosophy: "The staff is particularly creative and all have been specially chosen to work in an alternative setting."

Teachers at AMY have always had only five preparation periods per week and have taught one more period per day than other teachers in the district. The effect of this policy--then and now--is smaller class size. When the school first opened, students went home at 2:00 p.m. every day so that teachers had an hour of common planning time daily before their own contractually based dismissal time of 3:00 p.m. There was apparently little controversy around this policy, although at some point (lost to institutional memory), it disappeared and AMY students began to attend school on the same schedule as other middle schoolers in the district.

The only serious opposition to AMY's design for curriculum and instruction came in the early 1980s during the back-to-basics movement. At that time, the program was forced to adopt a standardized curriculum for all required subjects and was able to retain vertical grouping only for electives. By the mid-1980s, it was able to resume vertical grouping in all subject areas.

***Current design.*** The three key features of AMY's design--multi-age grouping, innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction, and flexible use of teacher time--are interlocking. Staff believe that one cannot exist without the others. For most of its history, the school has been able to make ad hoc adjustments in the use of time and on other policy matters to fit with its beliefs about how young adolescents learn. In effect, the school operated on a unofficial school-based management model before school-based management was "invented." In 1991-92, however, this mode of operation was formalized by district policy.

Today, AMY once again has official experimental status--this time within its district. Experimental schools must form a governance council and submit a school-based management plan, approved by 75 percent of the staff, for district review. AMY's governance council is composed of six teachers, four parents, the principal, and a member of the nonteaching staff. Its management plan was approved in 1991-92. The school's experimental status also means that it can request waivers from certain categories of district policies.

The staff at AMY continue to be there because they are committed to the school's philosophy and approach to teaching and learning. Although the school district has a strong teachers' union and a collective bargaining agreement with very specific rules on the hiring and placement of teachers, AMY has an experimental teacher contract, formalized through its school-based management plan. These differences in teaching load are made very clear to potential new staff during the interview process. Candidates are required to review the experimental contract before accepting a position at AMY. They are also apprised of the school's philosophy about how students learn best and about the level of staff time and energy commitments necessary to achieve those learning conditions. For example, having fewer planning periods during regular school hours means that AMY staff are frequently voluntarily involved in meetings and course development outside of the paid workday.

## Implementation Issues

The recent change to a formal, district- and union-approved, school-based management plan has advantages and disadvantages that have afforded AMY an opportunity to articulate its differences from the "regular" middle schools in the district and to move forward with reforms that mesh well with its philosophy--for example, development of alternative forms of student assessment. On the negative side, the formalization of its governance structure and the approval procedures associated with the district's school-based management program have actually reduced some of the flexibility that the program traditionally enjoyed. For example, in order to gain more in-school time for teacher planning, AMY recently requested a modification to its management plan that would have dismissed students at 2:00 p.m. one day per week (recall that in its first years, this was the daily schedule). The plan submitted subtracted a few minutes from each class period to gain the hour for joint planning. It was rejected by the joint district-union council. In the past, AMY would likely have been able to negotiate this change within its own community of students, staff, and parents.

Although union leaders praise AMY's management plan and experimental contract, they contend that relinquishing teacher preparation periods might set a new precedent that could be an issue when the collective bargaining agreement is renewed. The union has struggled long and hard to gain eight in-school preparation periods for its membership. The school district tends to be more accepting of idiosyncracies in school management as long as they don't involve additional money. Thus far, AMY has not requested money.

As part of its school-based management plan, AMY has also implemented a no-fail policy for students. Students who do not complete the work for a course must contract with the teacher to finish either the missing assignments or some other agreed-upon substitution for the work. The contract is signed by student, parents, teacher, and the principal. At the time of our visit in the spring of its first year of implementation, this policy was proving troublesome. Some teachers had a substantial number of students on contracts; monitoring them consumed a good deal of time. There was the further problem of the logical consequences of the policy for students who would otherwise be scheduled to move on to high school. The school governance council was debating this issue; possible solutions included retaining students for an additional trimester.

As of 1992-93, the school began using a teacher-developed, eight-page report card that included a summary page, a checklist of specific skill ratings developed for each class, and a narrative assessment. Preparation of these reports three times per year consumes a good deal of teacher time. The teacher time required to develop these reforms in student assessment methods led to the school's recently rejected request for an hour of common planning time per week.

## Impacts and Outcomes

Until recently, the Philadelphia public schools administered a grade-by-grade, curriculum-based test to all students. Because this test's focus was on the mastery of specific curriculum at particular grade levels, it was not well aligned with AMY's approach to curriculum and the school was excused from participating in the district testing program. Recently, however, the district has changed to a norm-based assessment, and AMY students now participate.

The principal and staff provided the following indicators of the school's success, current as of the 1992-93 school year:

- Eighty-four percent of students perform at or above grade level in both mathematics and reading
- Average daily attendance is 94 percent, considerably higher than the district's middle schools overall. This is particularly impressive considering that the majority of AMY students come from outside the neighborhood attendance area, with some students commuting an hour in each direction.
- Roughly 90 percent of the graduates go on to magnet high schools; anywhere from 60 to 75 percent are accepted at magnet schools with high admissions standards such as the district's high school for international affairs and its specialty school for engineering and science.

Although these achievements certainly help ensure AMY's continued existence, teachers are more interested in other kinds of impacts and outcomes that they observe as a result of the program's structure and philosophy. These include:

- Improved social relationships among students. Younger students look up to older students. Older students like to help others. Students in general like "being friends with everyone."

- Improved student behavior. Younger and more restless students are calmed by older, more serious students.
- More inspired and creative teaching, resulting from both the structure of the curriculum (teachers do not rely on a standardized curriculum or on textbooks) and as a side effect of smaller classes.
- Greater diversity of experience and opinion to which students are exposed in the classroom through discussion and hands-on learning activities.

As one teacher at AMY noted, numbers don't necessarily tell the school's full story. "The story is in how kids change in the classroom. I've seen students go from having no responsibility to really caring. [I've seen] kids who came in the sixth grade and didn't do a stitch of work become kids in the eighth grade who complete their work and realize this work is the key to their own success."

## Resources

AMY receives the same per-pupil funding as other middle schools in the district, and because the program has been in existence for most of the 25-year history of the school, it is difficult to assess how resources may have been reallocated to provide for vertical grouping and other innovations. However, teachers identify relatively small classes as a requirement for successful vertical grouping. At AMY, smaller classes are possible only in exchange for fewer paid planning periods, although this does not mean teachers actually need any less planning time to do their job well. In fact, the type of classrooms they create typically take more time to plan because they do not rely on traditional textbooks to provide the main instructional activities. Ultimately, then, the major cost has been paid by teachers who sacrifice their personal (unpaid) time.

# THE BEAVER ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

The Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School is a residential dropout recovery program serving young people in a ten-county Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) service delivery area of northern Michigan. The property is owned by the Charlevoix School District, but the program is administered by the Youth Employment and Training Programs office of the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District; four other ISDs are also involved.

Beaver Island lies in Lake Michigan--a 15-minute, small plane ride or a much longer ferryboat ride from mainland Michigan. It has a small year-round population and a much larger weekend population during the summer and fall. Students in the Lighthouse program affectionately refer to it as "Beaver-traz". The island has a small village with a K-12 school, a library, a market, a restaurant or two, and a medical clinic. The Lighthouse School is located at the opposite end of the island from the village on a 60-acre campus that has been developed over a ten-year period. The lighthouse tower itself is a national historic site. The property is used nearly year-round--in the fall and spring for the dropout recovery program and in the summer as a JTPA residential work/study camp. Participants in the summer program have been responsible for many of the physical improvements to the property over the years.

The dropout recovery program, which is in its ninth year, is coed and can serve 20 to 25 students (ages 16 to 21) in a session; 217 students were served between 1985 and 1991. Participating students may be pregnant, but they cannot bring babies or small children to the island.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

***Program goals.*** The program offered by the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School is designed to help students for whom the regular education system has not worked well. Participants have usually already dropped out of school or are close to doing so, and generally arrive at the school with negative attitudes about educators, educational institutions, and themselves. The overarching goal of the program is to put young people back on a productive track. For some participants, this may mean a high school diploma; for others, it may be a GED certificate or a job. Intermediate goals are social and ethical as well as academic, and include the following:

- Improved perceptions of self-worth
- Development and achievement of personal goals
- Acceptance of peer support
- Acceptance of personal responsibility for one's choices and actions
- Continuation toward personal goals after the residential experience ends

*Schedule.* The Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School offers two ten-week sessions during the school year. The fall session runs for 60 days from late September through Christmas. The second session runs from March through May. During each session, students live on the Lighthouse campus seven days per week. They are allowed two return trips to the mainland per session; the trips are typically scheduled around long holiday weekends.

During the sessions, academic classes are scheduled each weekday and on Saturday mornings for a total of 30 instructional hours per week. Other daily events include journal writing, a group meeting, chores, physical education or other late afternoon activity, watching and discussing the evening news, and evening study hall or activity period. Saturday afternoons are reserved for chores and trips to the library. On Sunday, breakfast is served an hour later and more free time is available. Planned activities on Sundays draw on the available expertise of the staff and are often oriented toward outdoor activity, taking advantage of the school's natural setting.

***Program.*** Each session begins with a two- or three-day orientation. A significant portion of the orientation is devoted to an Initiatives Course, which is conducted by a special instructor and designed to introduce and build trust among students and staff, who arrive on the island as strangers and must cohere into a living/learning community in a short space of time. The follow-up to the Initiatives Course is a three-day camping trip later in the session. (The program is well equipped with all kinds of gear for outdoor recreation in all seasons--sleeping bags, foul weather gear, parkas, mountain bikes, snowshoes, cross-country skis, backpacking equipment.)

The academic program is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Students' transcripts are evaluated to determine credits and requirements needed for high school graduation. Students may earn a maximum of 2.5 credits per session. (The state of Michigan recommends a minimum of 15.5 credits for a standard high school diploma, but individual school districts may set higher standards.) Wherever possible, students are clustered and a formal class is conducted. Thus, for example, in the fall of 1993, nine students were taking algebra and 12 were enrolled in general science. Other "classes," however, are individualized. In these situations, the students in a math class may be working on anything from general math to trigonometry. Considering the small number of faculty, the range of offerings available to students is quite expansive and includes electives (e.g., art, home and family, food preparation) as well as core subject areas. Students who are preparing for the GED exam or who need remediation in basic skills spend some of their academic time in the school's computer laboratory. The laboratory can also be used for writing papers.

## Design Issues

***Facilities.*** The Beaver Island Lighthouse property--listed as federal government surplus--was purchased by the Charlevoix Public Schools for $1.00 in 1975. At the time, the property was in considerable disrepair. The district's original intention was to turn the land and limited facilities into an environmental education center for high school students and teachers.

The first improvements to the property were made in 1978 using a $50,000 grant from the Governor's Comprehensive Employment & Training Act (CETA) Discretionary Fund. The grant supported the work of CETA-eligible youth from three northern Michigan counties who camped on the island for the summer. One of their first tasks was to construct cedar tent frames to house themselves. These frames continue to be used each year for a summer work camp for (now) JTPA-eligible young people.

Over a 16-year period, the original Beaver Island Lighthouse buildings have been completely gutted and renovated, and new structures have been added to the facility. Licensed contractors have been hired when legally required or when safety has been a factor. However, the bulk of the hard work has been accomplished by young people who gained both work experience and some academic credit. The campus now includes the following:

- The lighthouse tower (an historic landmark) and adjoining lighthouse keeper's house, which now contains three apartments
- The kitchen and cafeteria building (also used as classroom space)
- The Fog Signal Building, with classrooms and the computer laboratory

- The Pole Barn (garage, recreation room, teachers' office, laundry, heating system)
- Three winterized cabins

***Program.*** The Beaver Island Lighthouse facility has never been used as an environmental education center by the school district that purchased the property. Instead, the rehabilitation needed to make the campus usable made it a natural site for CETA/JTPA work experience activities. The fact that its remoteness required residential living added a dimension to the summer work experience program, making it almost like a short-term Job Corps site. (In the summer, participants return to the mainland every weekend.)

The school-year, alternative education program was added after significant improvements had been made to the property, allowing its use on a year-round basis. Like the summer program, funding for the fall and spring sessions comes primarily from JTPA. The alternative program is administered through the Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP) office of the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District. This office is actually an umbrella administration of youth training programs in a ten-county area of northern Michigan. The Beaver Island Lighthouse program is thus available to students from a large number of school districts.

The school's target audience is students who are disaffected from regular high school. Many--though not all--have dropped out. The primary purpose of the program is "to help students get back on track in school, in employment, and in life." During the time set aside for academics, the focus is on traditional aspects of schooling, and instructors keep students focused on their assignments. Nevertheless, both in the classroom and outside, no opportunity is lost to teach personal and social responsibility, to build confidence, or to encourage intellectual curiosity. For many participants, the academic credits earned are ultimately of less importance than issues related to tolerance, respect, acceptance, and trust.

Classes being offered in the fall of 1993 included: government, economics, American history I and II, and current affairs; creative writing, journalism, English grammar, American literature, and speech; general math, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry; general science; computer literacy; home and family; food preparation. Classes ranged in size from 12 students in general science to one student in more advanced courses or certain electives. Instructors handle the variety of academic levels and needs in their classes in various ways. In a science class, for example, the teacher established a theme such as health and provided some general instruction; students then worked on projects appropriate to the specific science credit that they needed to earn (i.e., biology, general science, chemistry). Although our time in classrooms at this site was limited, our overall impression is that the curriculum and instruction were more challenging than what one would find in the general track of a comprehensive high school.

*Staff.* For the 1993-94 school year, the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School had seven resident adult staff, including the site director and his wife, a head teacher, three aides, and a teacher intern. All the adults assist with instruction, although planning the overall curriculum and the students' individual educational plans is primarily the responsibility of the head teacher, who is state-certified and paid according to the salary schedule of the school district that owns the property. The aides wear several hats: maintenance, kitchen manager, teaching assistant, cabin counselors.

Staff are employed on nine-month contracts. During the sessions, they work seven days per week. The period between sessions (from Christmas to the beginning of March) is considered compensatory time. Before and after each session, staff have between five and seven paid days for planning or wrap-up.

Aides live in the dormitory cabins with the students; the site director and his wife, the lead teacher, and the teacher intern live in apartments in the restored living quarters attached to the lighthouse tower. Although the apartments are equipped with kitchens, all the adults generally take meals with the students in the dining hall.

Time is allocated for a daily staff meeting after lunch, although a meeting is not always needed. This time provides an opportunity for the staff to discuss problems or issues that have arisen or to plan special or weekend activities.

*Residential life.* All students have daily chores. Some work on the kitchen crew, others straighten up the dorms or the common spaces (classrooms, rec room, etc.). An important job is keeping the Garn heating system, which burns wood and circulates hot water, well stoked.

Because it is a residential program, the evenings and weekends on Beaver Island are also important learning opportunities. There is a television set in the recreation room, although its use is restricted. On most weekday evenings, one of the aides tapes the nightly news; after dinner, staff and students watch it and discuss current events. (Since our visit, the school has joined the Public Broadcasting System's Sky School program and will be able to receive PBS programming out of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Membership in the network also authorizes the school to tape any PBS programming for future use.) Time is set aside each weekday afternoon for "group"--an all-school meeting in the recreation room. The site director presides at these meetings and agenda items may come from either students or adults. At the meeting we attended, one major issue discussed was establishing the time when breakfast service is over every morning.

The hours between 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. are used in various ways. The Fog Signal Building is open and staffed as a study hall, and the computer laboratory is available for either word processing or computer-assisted instruction. Students can get individual tutoring during this time period as well. Other students may use the evening for the equivalent of extracurricular activities. We observed practice of a student-written and produced play, with both student and staff actors and actresses.

On Saturday mornings, classes continue. In the afternoon, everyone goes to the island public library (sometimes there are also midweek trips to the library). On Saturday evening, there is usually a special event (e.g., Halloween party, international dinner). Sundays are more relaxed. Some students go to the village for church or an A.A. meeting. On Sunday evening, one of the staff members offers a special class from 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. For example, an aide (a member of the Coast Guard reserves) taught navigation and the site director (a former vocational teacher in the building construction trades area) taught cost estimation; both of these classes counted as hours toward a math credit.

## Implementation Issues

***Location.*** The Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School is a mature program with an established track record that, as the Director says, "just gets better and better." Part of its success is contingent on its remote location. Because there are few distractions and temptations, students and faculty can give their undivided attention to getting the students' lives back on a positive course. Location, plus the small size of the living/learning community (fewer than 30 individuals), creates an intensity at the Beaver Island School that we did not feel as strongly in the larger residential programs that we visited. Beaver Island students come to the school with a lot of personal issues to resolve, and they are not allowed to avoid these issues.

There is also a location issue related to the property's ownership. Although the Charlevoix School District is the owner, it is not much involved in use of the property. Two years ago, the district thought of divesting itself of the property but was convinced to retain it because of increasing property values throughout Beaver Island. However, the growth in popularity of the island as a vacation resort, which has driven up property values, poses another kind of threat to the school's existence: As development creeps up to the edges of its 60 acres, the Director fears that upscale home owners will object to the presence of the young people that the program serves. The Youth Employment Training Program has already purchased an adjoining lot to act as a buffer zone against this eventuality.

***Development of the property.*** Over a 15-year period, about $1.5 million has been invested in improving the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School property, including the purchase of materials and equipment as well as wages for youth trainees under the JTPA summer program and salaries for adult supervisors and teachers. The lighthouse property actually offered youth training planners in northern Michigan a wonderful long-term project. In its absence, there would have been the annual scramble to identify suitable mainland opportunities for young people to obtain paid work experience. Nevertheless, because both the summer work experience and school year alternative program rely on "soft" federal money, the future of the Lighthouse property as an education and training institution is always in question and particularly dependent on the future configuration of federal job training dollars. If the property were not used nearly year-round, with regular maintenance and improvement, it would quickly deteriorate in the harsh climate of the Great Lakes' winter and storms.

***Staffing.*** Beyond financial issues, the primary problem in keeping the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School operating is finding the right staff. As one might expect, because of the isolation and the low pay for aides, there is considerable turnover. The current lead teacher is in her sixth and last year; this is the only job she has held since graduating from college and she says that it is time to move on. Most aides stay only for a year. When positions in the program are advertised, a number of applicants always emerge. However, these jobs aren't for everyone. Over the years, the Director has learned to be extremely wary of candidates who are looking for peace and quiet, time out, or escape from an unpleasant personal event. Working at this school is very demanding and time consuming. Further, it is important for the staff to cohere if things are going to run smoothly.

***Rules and regulations.*** Finally, there is the issue of what will be tolerated and what will not when one is living in a small residential setting such as this one with a group of somewhat antisocial young adults. The Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School has a student handbook with several pages of rules and regulations that have been adapted from those used by the federally supported Upward Bound program. Basic parameters of the behavioral code include the following:

- The school is a closed campus. No student may leave it without permission.
- Students are not allowed in the cabin supervisors' rooms or in cabins of the opposite sex.
- There is a universal 10:30 p.m. curfew every night, including weekends, and no one may leave a cabin before 6:30 a.m. in the morning. Windows may not be used as entrances or exits.
- Students are expected to attend all meals and classes and are responsible for getting themselves there.
- Students are expected to treat all members of the community with respect and consideration. Pairing off and public displays of affection are strongly discouraged. Communication about problems or concerns is encouraged, but abusive language is not tolerated.
- Smoking is allowed only in designated outdoor areas.
- Possession or use of alcohol, drugs, and weapons will result in automatic dismissal from the program. Practical jokes are also absolutely forbidden.

In each session, a small number of participants will inevitably be invited to leave. The negative behaviors that most commonly result in dismissal include violence, theft, and flaunting a sexual relationship. However, the student manual also makes clear that the staff reserve the right to dismiss students for nonparticipation--that is, for lack of interest in and commitment to the program's goals and purposes. Specific punishments are not spelled out for lesser infractions, but a process is identified for dealing with first-time and subsequent offenses.

## Impacts and Outcomes

Like many alternative programs, the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School measures its success differently than regular high schools. The Director says, "If we can just get them [the students] to assume responsibility for themselves and their actions, that will be a big step in the right direction." From our observations, we would say that the program does this and goes a step further in terms of developing tolerance, patience, and caring for others in young people who have had a tendency to either withdraw or flare up in regular school settings.

In terms of academic outcomes, the Director estimates that perhaps 30 percent of participants re-enroll in regular school when they return to the mainland. About 10 percent of the participants from any session take and pass the GED exam. Probably the largest proportion go to work. Participants in the spring session occasionally return to the island for the summer JTPA work camp. There is a Transition/Reentry Team to help students figure out their next steps when they return to the mainland. The team includes the local ISD Youth Employment advisor, social workers, and representatives of other agencies that may be involved with a student's continued education and training plan.

Originally, attendance on Beaver Island was a one-time event for each student. In recent years, however, the school has increasingly accepted returnees for a second and even a third session.

In contrast to most dropout recovery programs that we have visited, Beaver Island's academic program is quite rigorous. The focus is not exclusively on low level skills; students are challenged and held to high expectations in the classroom and in the other arenas of residential life. Because the school runs efficiently only when everyone pitches in, there are many opportunities for practical problem solving.

## Resources

The school year residential dropout recovery program at the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School costs approximately $136,000 to operate annually. Of this amount, more than $80,000 comes from federal JTPA Title IIA (Alternative Education) funds. The school district that owns the property budgets $13,000 for a caretaker; this money is used to support a maintenance person who also serves as cabin counselor for one of the male cabins. In addition, the school is entitled to state foundation aid for the students served; this allocation is based on the traditional "fourth Friday count" at the beginning of the school year and, on average, contributes about $40,000 to the school's total budget. Using an estimated total budget figure of $136,000 and assuming that the maximum number of students (22) is served in each session, the per pupil expenditure is about $3,100--very low in comparison with the state average ($5,900 in 1990-91) or the national average ($5,200).

A typical annual budget for use of the program's JTPA Title IIA funds includes the following items:

| | |
|---|---|
| Staff salaries & benefits | $ 65,000 |
| Student stipends | 1,590 |
| Contracted services | 1,025 |
| Transportation | 6,246 |
| Training support | 433 |
| Advertising | 60 |
| Food | 5,000 |
| Teaching supplies | 915 |
| Site supplies | 2,384 |
| Protective clothing | 175 |
| TOTAL | $ 82,828 |

Obviously, the bulk of the funding goes to staff salaries. For 1992-93, the total program budget (from all sources) for staff salaries and benefits came to about $113,500. The site supervisor and head teacher are considered professionals paid according to a school district salary schedule; they are not in the district's tenure system, however. Their salaries are in the $30,000 range, a reasonable salary considering that their room and board are free. The three aides are paid $8.00 per hour, plus a health insurance benefit. A teacher intern position was added for the first time in 1993-94; the intern is paid $6.50 per hour and receives no benefits. Each of these employees has a nine-month contract.

Beyond salaries and benefits, the program's other expenditures are very modest. Students receive a small stipend for spending money. The transportation budget line includes ferry travel (three round trips per student and staff member) plus gasoline and maintenance for the school's van. Food is purchased in bulk whenever possible. Other supplies and educational materials are purchased frugally as well. The school's cache of outdoor recreational equipment and foul-weather gear is extensive and has been accumulated over the years. A small amount is now budgeted for protective clothing each year to cover replacement and instances where certain sizes of boots or jackets are needed.

# THE CHINQUAPIN SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

The Chinquapin School is a private, coeducational, residential, college preparatory school serving about 100 students in grades 7-12 each year. Students who attend the school are, by definition, poor and largely from minority backgrounds. They also, by definition, "have potential." In 1992-93, the student body was 75 percent Hispanic, 20 percent African American, and 5 percent Anglo. Boys live on the campus from Monday night through Friday afternoon each week that school is in session; girls commute daily by bus from the city. All students pay little or no tuition.

Chinquapin was selected as a site for the Uses of Time Study specifically because of its residential nature. Students who attend boarding schools are essentially "at school" 24 hours per day. The rules, customs, belief systems, and values of the institution govern all aspects of their lives, not merely the six or so hours per day spent in classrooms. The tradition of sending children to boarding school in the United States has been largely confined to the country's social and economic elite. Chinquapin and a small number of other residential programs offer an opportunity to examine the effects of vastly increased amounts of time in an educational setting on educationally and economically disadvantaged children and youth.

Chinquapin is located on a quiet rural campus less than an hour east of Houston. It was founded in 1969 by a former teacher and department chair at an elite private day school who harbored a dream of providing the same type of college preparatory education for poor and minority students. It opened with 16 boys in seventh grade, with the intention of adding a grade each year through high school graduation. Despite some travails in the early years, the school endured, adding girls in 1978.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

***Residential aspects.*** Chinquapin describes itself as "an accredited, five-day boarding school established . . . to offer college preparatory education to able and deserving boys and girls from low-income families." Its residential nature is at the heart of its uniqueness. Male students and most faculty reside on campus during the school week in a living/learning community that the school's founder has described as "a quasi-spartan regime" and its current director characterizes as "a supportive but disciplined environment." The daily routine begins with a jog around the athletic field at 6:30 a.m. and ends with a required study hall from 7:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Free time is limited to about two hours per day.

Chinquapin has three guiding principles. The first is that all its graduates will be prepared for college. The second is an emphasis on personal responsibility for one's actions. The third is reflected in the school's motto--Quid Pro Quo: Everyone must give something back to the community. These three principles form a value system that governs life at the school for young people and adults alike. The emphasis on college preparation keeps the main life of the school tightly focused on academics through classes and monitored study halls. However, the coherence of the institution and student loyalty to it are achieved through other means--shared responsibility for maintaining the buildings and grounds, taking meals together, helping in the community beyond the school grounds, earning the school substantial annual funding by working for the local Professional Golf Association, visiting in faculty members' homes, and just "hanging out" in the dorms. During the school week, Chinquapin is home.

***Academic program.*** The academic program at Chinquapin is traditional and college preparatory. All students take two periods of English/language arts every day in addition to math, science, social studies, and computer science. Despite the school's smallness, a full range of mathematics and science courses are offered. Math is available through introduction to calculus. The science program includes life science, earth science, physical science, biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental science. The social studies program reflects the standard range of basic options available in a public comprehensive high school, including state-required Texas history. All students take computer science, beginning with computer literacy in the seventh grade.

Beginning in ninth grade, all students take Spanish, and Spanish is the only Advanced Placement course available at the school. Students who take Advanced Placement Spanish inevitably score 4's and 5's on the examination because most speak Spanish as a first language at home. The class schedules of seventh and eighth graders are rounded out with electives such as arts, library, and science enrichment.

Based on our limited observations, classroom instruction is also traditional. For example, in an English class the emphasis was on vocabulary words of the degree of difficulty found on college entrance exams. The first assignment was a worksheet, completed individually and then reviewed as a whole-class activity. Students then took turns reading aloud from a xeroxed literary selection.

Within each paragraph, the teacher focused their attention on words that he felt they may have pronounced without knowing the precise meaning. When explaining their meanings, he often placed the words in some context that was familiar to the students and, at one point, spoke to them in Spanish. Assigned homework for that night was two exercises in a paperback vocabulary book.

***Nonclassroom activities.*** Like most secondary school students, Chinquapin students spend many more hours outside classrooms than in. However, because they live in a residential community with rules, responsibilities, supervision, and expectations for how one's time will be managed, students have few segments in their day when there is no scheduled activity. The late afternoon hours are filled with assigned chores and daily physical education or sports activities (the girls commute home after chores). There is brief free time before and after dinner, followed by a supervised study hall until 9:00 p.m. Seventh and eighth graders have lights out at 10:30; older students may officially study or read until midnight. There are no televisions in the dormitories.

## Design Issues

***Governance.*** Chinquapin has both a Board of Trustees and an Advisory Board. The Board of Trustees is the policymaking body. It is quite large--41 members for 1992-93. Originally, Board members were appointed by the school's founder; now the Board itself elects new members who are, in general, from the metropolitan area where the school recruits students and includes educators, lawyers, small business owners, private investors, and others. The school's current director estimated that about 20 of the Board members are consistently active in Chinquapin affairs.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees meets ad hoc to work through issues before they are presented to the full Board. Most issues are directly or indirectly related to keeping the school solvent.

The Advisory Board (22 members) is less active than the Board of Trustees and includes members from beyond the school's recruitment area. Some of the names associated with this body are nationally recognized.

***Recruitment and selection of students.*** Chinquapin actively recruits students from public and parochial elementary schools in its metropolitan area. Most recruitment efforts are aimed at sixth graders and their families. Recruitment visits to schools generally take place in the winter and involve the Director, some faculty members, and some current students. The next step is a series of follow-up meetings (usually on a Saturday) to which parents are also invited. At this point, prospective students are given a 30-minute basic skills test. Students who are significantly behind grade level in reading and mathematics are not encouraged to apply. Throughout the recruitment process, the school makes clear that it values diversity and that ability to pay tuition is not an important factor in the selection process.

In June after the regular school year ends, approximately 80 sixth through ninth graders are invited to spend four days on the Chinquapin campus. This event is billed as a summer "camp," but its real purpose is a simulation of what residential school life is like--an opportunity for potential students and the school to size each other up. As during the school year, boys remain overnight and girls commute. The experience winnows out some applicants right away. Some children are seriously homesick; others are appalled by the lack of television. Stealing is almost always an issue, and any applicant caught in this misdemeanor is automatically rejected.

Following the camp, the student selection committee prepares the acceptance list. Typically, the school invites about 20 students to enroll as seventh graders. Because there is some attrition at the other grade levels, a few students are also admitted to grades 8-11 each year.

Chinquapin's recruitment efforts continue to be aggressive, but a high proportion of current Chinquapin students heard about the school through word-of-mouth contacts in their extended families or neighborhoods. In several cases, siblings or cousins have previously attended.

Chinquapin receives many telephone inquiries from interested parents throughout the year. (Some are triggered by a televised public service announcement about the school that is funded by a local business and usually aired at 3:00 a.m.) More often than not, callers know little or nothing about the school and its mission. Frequently, the calls are about residential placement for a special education student. Other calls are from families whose economic circumstances are more comfortable than the population that the school targets.

***Facilities.*** Chinquapin's first home was in a gritty industrial town on the nearby bay, and the school still retains a community service relationship with agencies there. In 1972, however, the founder was able to purchase the 20-acre chicken farm that is the school's permanent location. The farm buildings (mainly chicken coops) were razed, and buildings purchased from a defunct church camp were moved to the site on trucks where they became dormitories and classrooms. Several of these buildings are still in use. However, over the years, more buildings have been erected (e.g., the administration/library building, a dining hall, the gym, and faculty housing).

Although there are residential neighborhoods nearby, the school's campus is bounded by hedges and trees, faculty housing, pasture land (with cows), and its own garden and playing fields. The effect is a self-contained community, with little to tempt students to venture beyond the school's perimeter.

***Institutional life.*** Life at Chinquapin is structured but not regimented. The day falls into a set of comfortable routines. For the boys, the day begins with jogging at 6:30 a.m. Although this activity may seem like a punishment to some, this is the hour when the girls board the bus in Houston to arrive at school for first period; there is, therefore, some equity to the early start of the school day. After classes end each day, all students are required to participate in chores--cleaning classrooms and dormitories, working in the garden or on garden machinery, and so on. Everyone serves on the kitchen crew on a rotating basis, doing setup and cleanup chores before and after every meal.

In the late afternoon, the girls return to the city by bus while the boys are involved in sports before dinner. (Girls stay an additional hour two days per week for physical education and sports.) After dinner, there is a required study hall from 7:15 until 9:00, followed by lights out for the younger students at 9:30. Seniors serve as proctors in the dorms for younger boys; older students share suites in groups of five.

On Friday, classes are shortened by ten minutes each and run until 12:30. After lunch and cleanup, all students go home for the weekend.

***Faculty.*** In 1992-93, Chinquapin had eight full-time and three part-time faculty, including two teaching couples. The school's Director is considered a full-time teacher. All full-time faculty teach four periods per day, except the Director who teaches three.

Most faculty live in houses or apartments on the campus. A number of them have families, so it is not unusual to see the Chinquapin teenagers interacting with younger children. The faculty is relatively stable and now includes one former graduate. The Director first taught at the school during its difficult initial year of operation. After teaching in another state for several years, he returned to Chinquapin where he and his wife have now been for 16 years. Another teacher has been at the school for 15 years, and several have taught there for six years or more.

In addition to teaching duties, all full-time faculty members have: (1) one duty day per week when they are responsible for the sunup to bedtime routine; (2) two afternoon study hall assignments per week; and (3) sports/physical education responsibility daily. During the evening study halls, which are held in the dining hall and the library, the duty person is on call, but students wanting extra help may also go to the homes of specific teachers. In addition, all faculty act as counselors/mentors to students.

The faculty come from many backgrounds. The majority have masters degrees. One teacher, an Irishman by birth, came to Chinquapin in 1979 after spending nearly 20 years teaching in Peru. He teaches Spanish and English, and his fluency in Spanish is an obvious asset in establishing rapport with the Hispanic students. A younger teacher graduated from Chinquapin more than a decade ago and returned to teach after acquiring his bachelor's degree.

***Other staff.*** In addition to the Director and the teaching staff, Chinquapin has a Director of Development whose association with the school began as a member of its Board of Trustees. Support staff include a full-time secretary, a cook, and a general maintenance person. Students handle serving and cleanup in the dining hall but not food preparation. Similarly, student chores include keeping the buildings and grounds neat, but they cannot be responsible for serious mechanical, electrical, or plumbing repairs.

***Discipline.*** Chinquapin does not tolerate serious discipline problems. Students charged with substance abuse, fighting, or stealing are suspended or expelled. Most are given the option of returning to the school the next year if they want a second chance. Serious infractions of discipline policy are handled by the Director.

Minor misdemeanors (tardiness, avoiding work details or the morning jog, etc.) come before the Student Leadership Committee, composed of two students from each class. The committee has a fair amount of power, which it tries to use responsibly by assigning punishments that fit the crime. Thus, for example, avoidance of chores may lead to assignment to the least desirable chores--cleaning the bathrooms or dealing with the compost pile. No corporal punishment is allowed, although it is legal in schools in this state.

***Community service.*** Chinquapin puts strong emphasis on giving back to the community. One long-term relationship with the local community is through the school's Interact Club, which meets at lunch time one day each week. Participating students, in conjunction with the local Rotary Club, plan and implement an annual Christmas party for handicapped youngsters. In return, the Rotary Club makes a $1,000 donation to the school in the form of a scholarship for a graduating senior. Students help out at other community events as well, such as the annual chili cook-off.

***Parent involvement.*** Chinquapin asks three things of parents: (1) Make sure your child completes weekend homework assignments; (2) Help out with school maintenance on Parent Work

Days, which occur on weekends; and (3) Help with annual student recruitment activities. The school is moderately successful in achieving these goals. Some parents become very involved.

## Implementation Issues

***Recruitment and retention of students.*** The school has not entirely solved the problem of recruiting and retaining students. There is some "churn" in the student population, especially at about ninth grade. According to the Director and others, girls are easier to recruit and more likely to persist. African American students of both sexes are harder to recruit than Hispanics. Changes in the grade structure of the local public schools (i.e., to grade 6-8 middle schools) may mean that Chinquapin will have to consider adding sixth grade, which it would prefer not to do.

The Director believes that one of the school's problems in recruiting African American students has been its lack of minority faculty. There is now, for the first time, one African American teacher. A more recent factor is competition from private African American day schools in the city.

Although the structured, boarding school life is valued by the students who persist at Chinquapin, it can drive some students away. The lack of television seems especially harsh to some younger students.

***Coeducation.*** In the 1970s, Chinquapin made a brief experiment with residential coeducation but found it unworkable, primarily for discipline and management reasons. The campus is too small to place much distance between the living quarters, and the school's supervisory structure for dormitory living depends on a combination of student proctors and the honor system rather than a live-in adult. The present arrangement, with girls commuting by bus each day, preserves coeducation but avoids temptation. Some of the girls interviewed expressed their desire to live on campus. Their reasons focused on the family obligations that come with living at home. Rather than being free to concentrate on their homework, they are called upon to babysit, shop, or do other errands. Nevertheless, as the Director noted, the girls do very well at Chinquapin and are less likely to drop out.

***Finances.*** Fundraising is a constant activity--and a worry. The Director and the Director of Development spend a great deal of time soliciting contributions and other kinds of support. Although the school has a small portfolio of investments, it does not have a real endowment to support it through hard times. It is in this area that the active members of the Board of Trustees provide the school with the most assistance and advice.

***Staffing***. Teaching at a school like Chinquapin is not for everyone. The location is remote and responsibilities do not end at 3:00 p.m. Salaries are quite low, although housing is provided, as are meals if faculty (and their families) choose to eat in the dining hall rather than in their own quarters. Based on past experience, the school is wary of hiring young single women primarily because of its isolation.

When there is a faculty opening, the school advertises locally, but this is not a particularly effective strategy. Using various teacher locator agencies has proven successful but costly because the agencies charge 15 percent of the advertised salary. Conferences offer other opportunities for teacher recruitment and interviews.

## Impacts and Outcomes

Although the number of students whom Chinquapin touches is small, the school has an impressive record with respect to the single student outcome that is the school's primary goal: college attendance. In order to graduate from Chinquapin, seniors are required to apply to and be accepted at an institution of higher education. This is, so to speak, the exit exam.

In the past three years, 100 percent of Chinquapin graduates have enrolled in college. (The size of the average graduating class is about 12 students.) In any given year, a few graduates will leave the state to attend highly selective institutions such as Smith, Wellesley, Stanford, and Northwestern. The school has some college scholarship money available and helps students directly as much as it can. It also stays in touch with many students and thus has some sense of college completion rates. Most finish on average, taking five years to do so.

Chinquapin keeps track of how its older students do on college entrance examinations and compares their scores with the national, state, and local averages. Table 1 shows the results on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for a five-year period. In all years, the Chinquapin students scored higher than average students in the other groups.

## Table 1
## Average SAT Scores of Chinquapin Students
(1989-93)

| | Class of 1993 | | | Class of 1992 | | | Class of 1991 | | | Class of 1990 | | | Class of 1989 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total | Verbal | Math | Total |
| Chinquapin Seniors | 478 | 520 | 998 | 486 | 512 | 998 | 493 | 555 | 1048 | 482 | 472 | 954 | 436 | 482 | 918 |
| Seniors Nationally | 424 | 478 | 902 | 422 | 474 | 896 | 424 | 476 | 900 | 427 | 476 | 903 | 428 | 476 | 904 |
| Seniors State | 413 | 472 | 885 | 411 | 463 | 874 | 413 | 461 | 874 | 415 | 462 | 877 | 417 | 462 | 879 |
| Seniors Local District | 384 | 446 | 830 | 392 | 448 | 840 | 394 | 444 | 838 | 402 | 453 | 855 | 409 | 458 | 867 |

Chinquapin administers the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) to entering seventh graders as a baseline measure of where they are starting from. The test is then readministered in eighth and ninth grades. On average, according to the school's director, students register about a two-year gain in achievement after their first year at the school.

The strong academic background that students get from Chinquapin is only part of the story. In interviews, the director and staff stressed the character-building side of what the school offers as well. In their neighborhood schools, these students might have been characterized as disadvantaged. As Chinquapin students, they are taught to view their own problems as minor and to concentrate on what they have to give to others. The community service activities are designed to foster this attitude. The staff also count their successes in terms of students' growth in taking personal responsibility for their actions, learning to live in a community, and treating others fairly and kindly. Students stressed the value of strong personal relationships with teachers and other students and of school as a safe haven with fewer peer pressures and distractions.

## Resources

***Revenues.*** Tuition at Chinquapin is free or nearly free. If a family is able, the school requests a small monthly tuition payment, often as little as $20. On average, families contribute $220 annually. In actuality, many families are unable to meet even this modest payment; students (and sometimes parents) are allowed to work on buildings and grounds projects during vacation, weekends, or summers as payment-in-kind. In 1991-92, total revenues from tuition came to about $16,000 (3 percent) of a total budget of $564,000. Per-pupil expenditure is about $6,000 annually.

The vast bulk of revenues come from local contributors--foundations, organizations, and individuals. The school's annual report for 1992 shows that 20 "Scholarship Benefactors" contributed amounts of $5,400 and above. Another 17--including individuals, foundations, and churches--are "Sponsors," contributing between $2,000 and $5,399 each. A longer list of "Associates" gave in the $750 to $1,999 range, while a page and half of names contributed smaller amounts. Combined, these contributions made up 57 percent of the school's total operating budget for the year.

Other sources of support included fundraisers and interest on investments. For example, a local theater benefit--a performance of "A Chorus Line"--netted the school more than $65,000. A luncheon featuring a popular columnist yielded $18,000. In 1983-84, the school received a large bequest, which has been invested and yields about $80,000 from interest. The only federal contribution to the budget is about $25,000 worth of commodities from the surplus food and hot lunch programs.

Finally, Chinquapin has had a special relationship with the local affiliate of the Professional Golf Association for many years. This relationship has allowed the school to build and improve its physical plant. In exchange for the labor of 50 students at the annual PGA Tournament, the Association has given the school from $30,000 to $100,000 per year for 14 years specifically for capital improvements. The Association also contributed the schools' vans for transporting students.

***Expenditures.*** As in all schools, the biggest expenditure (54 percent of total expenditures) is for faculty salaries and benefits. In comparison with public schools, however, this proportion is very low. (Nationally, the public schools spend about 93 percent of total expenditures on these budget categories.) One math teacher is partially supported with state money for remediation that flows through the local community college. There are no regulatory strings attached to these funds that prohibit their use by a private institution.

Contract labor, utilities, and food/kitchen account for another 19 percent of total expenditures. Expenditures in other categories such as instructional supplies, transportation, and maintenance are very low.

# CHIRON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

Chiron Middle School is an experiment in progress. Using the Minneapolis and its environs as its classroom, it aims to teach middle grade students through experiential education. Begun in 1989-90, Chiron is blossoming according to a design produced by the school's steering committee. The implementation plan, negotiated with the state teachers' union and district administration, calls for "phasing in" the experimental school over a four-year period. Lagging slightly behind schedule in terms of total enrollment and number of learning sites, Chiron is developing as intended in terms of its basic blueprint.

The school's administrative center and homebase classrooms are located in an historic church basilica school building, but students often spend part of their school day off campus at one of the school's "learning sites." Each learning site has its own curricular emphasis and two teachers providing all site-based instruction and coordinating fieldtrips, mentors, and apprenticeships. The learning sites and their curriculum emphases are as follows: (1) a state university campus where Chiron students study science and the environment; (2) the "downtown site," a renovated space next to one of Chiron's business partners, where lessons focus on business, government, and law; (3) the Basilica itself, located near theaters and art institutions, located near theaters and art institutions, where work focuses on the visual and performing arts; and (4) the fourth site, which also operates out of the Basilica, where the curriculum revolves around community service and technology.

Chiron's students come from throughout Minneapolis, enrolling at Chiron through the district's open enrollment program. The original plan calls for gradually expanding the total school enrollment to 300 students in grades 5-8 by 1992-93; lagging slightly behind schedule, Chiron enrolled 200 in grades 6-8 that year.[1] There is no substantial waiting list for Chiron Middle School; the community curriculum coordinator attributes this to the fact that "Chiron is not for every middle school student." Many of Chiron's students have elected to attend the innovative school because they did not adapt well to the district's more traditional schools, according to the principal. These students and their parents are hopeful that Chiron will be a more engaging school because of its flexible schedule, its high activity level, and its transfer of responsibility for learning to the students.

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[1] Grade 5 was dropped in the third year because the students were too young to handle the freedom and flexibility that are the hallmarks of Chiron's curriculum and schedule.

The self-selection bias notwithstanding, Chiron has a "good cross section of the district's students," according to the community curriculum coordinator. The district's student placement office ensures that racial balance is achieved at all schools. In 1992-93, 60 percent of Chiron's students were white (compared with 90 percent statewide and 46 percent in the district), 31 percent black, 6 percent Native American, 2 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Asian. Forty percent of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (compared with 23 percent statewide and 52 percent in the district). Seven percent of Chiron's students had handicapping conditions (not physical), and none of the students were limited English proficient.

During the 1992-93 school year, the faculty consisted of eight home-base teachers, a special education teacher, a part-time gym teacher, a part-time advocate (home-school liaison), a part-time counselor, the principal, and the community curriculum coordinator.

The core concept of Chiron Middle School originated within the local business community. In 1988, an influential business leader, along with other citizens, proposed to the school district a partnership between the private sector and the public schools to improve local public education. According to the original proposal, the planners identified the following key features of the potential project early in their deliberations. The project should, they said in *A Proposal of the Chiron Steering Committee to the Public Schools* (March 1989):

- Be a significant departure from conventional schools and traditional learning methods
- Have the potential to achieve a critical breakthrough in education such as measurably greater learning for all students or more efficient use of resources
- Fundamentally elevate the decisionmaking involvement of teachers and parents
- Have a major impact on the school district beyond being an excellent program itself
- Serve a cross-section of local district students, representative of the city's student population
- Have a per student cost comparable to that of the state's traditional public schools

The designers assumed that a "leading edge" school that could combine the wisdom and resources of the public and private sectors would attract financial supporters within the business community. They did not, however, anticipate that as a maverick and a brainchild of the private sector, the school would experience isolation throughout the public school system.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

Chiron Middle School is first and foremost a quality-of-time innovation. The regular school day, for example, includes a four-hour learning period to accommodate students' extended project work at off-campus sites. However, scheduling conflicts and the teachers' need for time to develop the new and evolving school quickly raise critical quantity-of-time issues.

***Block scheduling***. Chiron uses two dimensions of block scheduling: the school year and the school day. The school year is divided into multiple-week sessions. The number of sessions is equal to the number of learning sites; both are linked to the school's total school enrollment. In 1992-93, there were four learning sites and four nine-week sessions. Two homebase classes of 25 students each worked together at each site. The 50-student groups rotated among sites each session so that every student participated at every site over the course of the school year.

Since the school began, Chiron teachers have organized the school day by establishing a large block of time for site-based work. Only mathematics is taught as an isolated course and math class is relegated to a traditional 45- to 50-minute period. Like other aspects of the emerging school, the daily schedule is in transition, evolving from one year to the next; but, extended time at the learning sites is a constant.

Block scheduling is the cornerstone of several curricular and instructional innovations at Chiron, according to faculty members. It facilitates (1) integrated learning through curriculum themes; (2) experiential learning; (3) students' attachments to school and feelings of membership to a "house" of 50 students and a staff team; and (4) team teaching.

***Mixed-age groups***. All Chiron students participate in mixed-age classes; only math is organized by grade. Mixed-age classes at Chiron are based on a philosophy of "continuous progress." Thus, teachers constantly challenge students with individualized instructional plans. The system is evolving, and not all teachers are completely satisfied that they have achieved the goal. The mixed-age groups necessitate extending the curriculum in terms of breadth and depth, to provide a continuous challenge to students as they learn more and more. Chiron faculty are in the process of codifying a three-year curriculum for each site that explores core concepts and allows for individual growth.

***Experiential education and learning partners***. One of Chiron's goals is to blur the distinction between learning that occurs in school and out of school. Life is learning, claim Chiron staff, so they strive to extend learning into the community through their community-based curriculum. To further expand learning opportunities, Chiron teachers also pair students with mentors, peer tutors, and apprenticeship experiences.

***Extended-day/less instructional time.*** All Chiron students and faculty participate in the extended day; however, the extra daily time does not result in more instructional time during the school year. The extra 30 minutes was added to the school day in 1990-91 in order to "buy" ten staff development days for faculty members; the extra 30 minutes each day simply makes up for the ten days when students do not attend school so that faculty can engage in professional development activities. Furthermore, Chiron students spend 20 to 40 minutes a day in transit when doing their site work at the "downtown" or university sites.

However, little instructional time is actually lost, say the faculty. "We don't worry so much about the transition time," explained one teacher. "Middle school students won't be at their desks full time anyway," explained one teacher. The students don't all share this perspective, according to a researcher who has spent considerable time at the school over a two-year period and has interviewed many of Chiron's students. "The very bright kids see it as a double-edged sword," he explained. They praise the school for its liberating schedule and the degree of choice of learning activities that is conferred on the students, but in the next breath they worry that they are not learning as much as they should be. This could be a legitimate concern or simply a natural response to the never-before-tried type of schooling that is unique to Chiron. One eighth grader told us that although he is not always sure that he is learning what he should, he knows friends--former Chiron students--who are getting very high grades (A+) in ninth grade [after graduating from Chiron]."

## Design Issues

***Time and the school development task.*** The steering committee took almost a year to compose the new school's design, but they did so without the participation of instructional staff. Only two months after the instructional staff was in place, local political pressures forced Chiron to open. Chiron's design required school faculty to start from scratch in developing their school. The leading design flaw, faculty members agree, was a virtual absence of formally scheduled time before the school opened for the instructional staff to conceptualize their ground-breaking school, establish a shared philosophy, identify and recruit learning sites, design site-based curricula, plan interdisciplinary instructional lessons, define and learn their new roles as experiential education teachers and school managers under an emerging model of site-based management, establish partnerships with community agencies, and raise funds for staff development and other critical operations.

*Independence and isolation.* Regarded as the creation of an outside group, Chiron did not receive additional financial support from the district. The paucity of additional district support during the school's development stage has left the taxed Chiron faculty obliged to seek outside funds and rely on out-of-school time for planning, development, and reflection. In addition, Chiron found itself in competition with the district when courting the sponsorship of a local investment firm. The company ultimately decided to go with Chiron, a decision that pleased Chiron supporters but further estranged Chiron's relations with the district.

*(Proposed) Year-round schedule.* The original proposal calls for a year-round school schedule in Chiron's fourth year of operation, consisting of five nine-week sessions (which would amount to an extra 45 days of school beyond the traditional 180 days). No mention was made of the future of the extended-year school schedule. It is easy to imagine that given the press of simultaneous development and implementation by Chiron faculty, the fiscal crises that plague both the school district and Chiron's business partners, the plans for a year-round school schedule are on hold for the time being.

## Implementation Issues

*Development of learning sites and accompanying curricula.* Chiron teachers have developed the curriculum as they go, an arrangement that has spawned high anxiety and required a tremendous amount of work outside the classroom. The curriculum development process and the final outcomes are intimately related to the interests and strengths of individual staff members. The high staff turnover during the school's formative years has confounded the curriculum development process. One teacher explained that "the first quarter [of the 1992-93 school year] was hectic because [my teaching partner for the Science/Environment site] was not hired until August 1992, and I don't know Science. I am the language arts person on the team." Consequently, the two Science/Environment teachers spent a good deal of their own free time during the fall planning the year's curriculum. "But it should be easier next year," the teacher continued, "because we have built up a three-year curriculum now."

A community curriculum coordinator was hired in the third year to handle much of the community resource development work that fell on teachers' shoulders during the first two years. In year four, the curriculum coordinator's salary was pieced together from about four different sources; her role was precarious at best. In 1993-94, she continues to work full time during the school year, but funds are insufficient to pay her during the summer, and her benefits are in jeopardy for the 1994-95 school year.

*Inadequate daily preparation time.* In addition to the scant amount of time devoted to advanced planning by Chiron faculty, time for daily preparation was also neglected. Given the custodial functions that schools perform (i.e., students require supervision at all times to ensure safety and a reasonable degree of learning), issues of keeping students engaged in learning tasks dominate the efforts of teachers during the school day. The only time left for Chiron teachers to prepare materials, communicate with community resource persons, and schedule fieldtrips--let alone develop radically different conditions of schooling for children--is time outside the professional day. Faculty meet voluntarily every week for a one-hour staff meeting and hold short "stand-up" meetings during the week as needed.

A key principle of the original proposal, which holds that Chiron will cost no more to operate than other district middle schools, reflects a measure of shortsightedness in terms of the planning required during the school's formative years. As a result of the original tenet and the current climate of fiscal restraint, Chiron's faculty feel bound to "do everything" despite the apparent impossibility of getting everything done well. A major leap forward in terms of moderating the workload on teachers, according to one teacher, was establishing a modicum of convention. "The struggle has been to ritualize, to establish routines, and to write things down. But, finally, we have some built-ins. . . . Ideally, we should spend 25 percent less time with the students. We need Friday off to plan. [As it is right now], we have to deliver the system and change it simultaneously."

Further confounding the no-time-for-planning problem is that teachers agreed to give up planning time for smaller class sizes. Nevertheless, at least some of the teachers have found ways to get planning time without formalizing it. For example, the Government/Business/Law teachers have arranged to coteach a chess class during the "options period" on Friday. They don't actually teach anything, but spend the 110 minute-period planning together for their site work while the students play chess. Similarly, the Science/Environment teachers have found a volunteer at the university site to teach Japanese to their students for 30 minutes a day, thus freeing them up to plan. Although they welcome the planning time, it is not *joint* planning time. The Japanese teacher takes half of the 50-student class at a time, so one of the two Chiron teachers is always with students.

***Faculty turnover***. The high turnover that characterizes Chiron's teaching faculty crippled early implementation, further thwarting continuity from one year to the next in a program that was anything but stable. After the first year, four of the six teachers transferred to other schools. After the second year, six of nine teachers transferred. In the third year, the staff began to acquire some stability, according to one teacher who joined the Chiron faculty in the second year. She and others attribute the high faculty turnover to one major design flaw: lack of time.

***Incompatible faculty assignment procedures***. The principal pointed out that although some attention was paid to briefing the first year's faculty of the new role they would assume if hired to work at Chiron, virtually no attention was given to the hiring of compatible staff once the school had begun. Given the high turnover in staff that Chiron experienced in the first two years of operation--due mostly to teachers' belief that the level of effort required to sustain the school was too high--selection, enculturation, and sustenance of new staff members is a chronic problem. Teachers pointed out the consequences of assigning staff to Chiron with disregard for the issues of compatibility and shared ethic. During the third year, a new teacher adamantly adhered to the union contract in terms of the time she devoted to school issues, and she openly resisted participating in the collaborative curriculum development process that others were committed to. The result was dissension and low morale; ultimately, the teacher requested a transfer to another school. Furthermore, the district's practice of year-round job bidding and personnel transfers is very disruptive to a school like Chiron that is *not* following a prescribed and well-documented curriculum.

***Limited internal leadership***. A student of organization process would be a great help to Chiron. At a staff meeting, the faculty spent a lot of time "spinning their wheels" on a couple of issues and never got through their agenda. From all accounts after the fact, it was a typical meeting. Staff freely admit that they are trying to learn how to govern themselves and that they don't have all the skills they need to do so. The principal carefully explained her staunch refusal to assume control because it would interfere with the faculty's learning process. Rather, the job of running staff meetings rotates among the faculty. The principal sees herself as a facilitator with responsibility for coordinating activities, getting resources, protecting the school from district politics, and enabling effective teaching to occur.[2]

## Impacts and Outcomes

Chiron was charged by the steering committee with developing and implementing alternative measures for assessing student achievement. Among the tools used are: a family learning plan; a learning styles inventory; alternative report cards, developed by Chiron faculty; self-assessments; anecdotal records; portfolios of student work (including writing samples); checklists of specific skills; project displays and reports; subject area tests; and nationally-normed standardized tests. The only measure that lends itself to cost-effective aggregation is, of course, the standardized test. The curriculum coordinator admitted, however, that faculty find the standardized tests assess only a fraction of the teaching and learning that Chiron aspires to.

***Academic achievement***. The faculty's views on assessment notwithstanding, Chiron students do take the standardized tests that are required by the district. They score just above district averages in reading and math, with reading achievement being slightly higher. Spring 1992 results for seventh graders on the district's standardized test show Chiron students scoring above the district average (in terms of percent of questions answered correctly) in total reading, three reading subtests (decoding, vocabulary, comprehension), total math, and one of two math subtests (concepts). Chiron students scored slightly below the district average on math computation.

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[2] The community curriculum coordinator has recently reported that a new principal takes a more direct role in staff meetings and that the faculty have adopted more efficient procedures for making decisions.

Spring 1993 scores on the California Achievement Test (Table 1) show Chiron sixth graders achieving below the national average (50th percentile) in both reading and math, in basic skills (i.e., reading vocabulary, math computation) and in advanced skills (i.e., reading comprehension, math concepts). The eighth graders, on the other hand, scored well above average in all areas except math computation.

***Student attendance rates***. Chiron students have an average daily attendance rate of 95 percent, according to school records. Only 15 percent of students leave Chiron for any reason during their three- or four-year tenure at the middle school, compared to the 45 percent average turnover rate of all district schools.

### Table 1
### Median Percentile Rank of Chiron Students, by Subject and Grade, 1993

| Grade Cohort | Reading | | Mathematics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Vocabulary | Comprehension | Computation | Concepts |
| Sixth grade | 42 percentile | 45 percentile | 35 percentile | 41 percentile |
| Eighth grade | 77 percentile | 65 percentile | 35 percentile | 69 percentile |

***Impact on teachers***. Because Chiron is a new school, not a reconstituted one, there is no past practice to compare it to. Nonetheless, many of the teachers did teach at traditional schools and they claim that their role as teacher is different at Chiron. They have the autonomy and authority to make pivotal decisions about curriculum and instruction, from the use of support staff to the books that will be used to teach subject matter. The new role is both emancipating and at times overwhelming in its ambiguity.

## Resources

By design, Chiron is required to compete equally with other schools for district resources and the school faculty have taken this requirement to heart. This aspect of the original plan and the degree to which faculty have internalized it mediate against any broad awareness at the district level that experiments in radical change need extra resources to create and recreate themselves during the formative years when few organizational "givens" exist. This contradiction seems to have crippled Chiron's development. To partially address this stark discrepancy between available and needed resources for program development, early in 1994, Chiron is developing a proposal for additional funds to support professional development activities.

Chiron receives the same per pupil allocation as do other schools in the district. In 1991-92 (the most current data available) that was $6,465. Like other local public schools, Chiron maintains partnerships with private sector businesses, that augment school resources, usually through in-kind goods and services. Chiron's curriculum coordinator points out that these additional resources are essential to Chiron for two reasons: (1) the new school is strapped for resources, and (2) as an institution wedded to the concept of community-based education, bringing community resources--human, monetary, and in-kind--into the school and taking the school classroom into the community are curricular imperatives.

Unfortunately, however, the recession hit the district schools and the local business community like it hit the rest of the country. Funds that Chiron designers had counted on from the business community to finance the innovative activities failed to appear when the recession limited the discretionary spending of local businesses. Over the past several years Chiron has received modest but welcomed in-kind contributions. For example, one business partner renovated a large classroom space next to their downtown offices which Chiron rents for its "downtown learning site." The state university contributes classroom space in one of its agricultural education buildings, where Chiron students study science and the environment, plus two part-time graduate students who serve as mentors for several students, and the counsel of one university professor, as needed. An average of 12 interns work part time at Chiron each year. Most are college students seeking teacher certification, but several are pursuing careers in theater or the arts. Chiron has no estimate of the dollar value of these in-kind contributions.

# CONCURRENT OPTIONS

## Overview and Context

ConCurrent Options is a dropout prevention program in New York City that offers alternative learning opportunities to public high school students while allowing them to earn credits toward graduation. The program was implemented in 1987 and primarily serves overage students at risk of leaving school before they graduate. Participating students are not limited to a traditional class schedule at their "home school." Instead, they choose from a set of educational alternatives that include academic and job-related experiences outside the regular school day and year.

The individual options include PM School, Evening School, Summer School, Shared Instruction, Adult Education Classes, Independent Study, Work Experience Credit, and Community College Classes. Many of these offerings were available to students before 1987. For example, Evening School, Summer School, and Adult Education Classes were introduced during the first half of the century; and Shared Instruction, Work Experience Credit, and Community College Classes have been introduced during the past ten to 15 years. ConCurrent Options brought all of the options together, though, under one conceptual and administrative umbrella.

There were 125 public high schools in the city served by Concurrent Options during the 1992-93 school year, including diploma-granting alternative schools. Most of these schools offered more than one Option. In 32 high schools, ConCurrent Options was financed with state funds under Project Achieve, which is part of the state's Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program. These schools were identified as Project Achieve schools in the spring of 1990 because their students had high dropout rates, low standardized test scores, and poor attendance rates. The other 93 high schools offered options at their own discretion and used funds from their regular operating budgets to finance them.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics and Eligibility Criteria

Each participating school provides one or more of the following options:

- *PM School.* This Option offers classes to overage students in grades 9-12 at their "home school" after the regular school day is over. Many PM School courses meet less often than regular school day courses, but for longer periods of time.

- *Evening School.* This Option is limited to students who are at least 16 years old. Students who failed early in their academic careers but are currently passing most subjects are considered excellent candidates for this Option.

- *Summer School.* This Option is available to all students in grades 9-12; students may enroll in advanced courses as well as repeat class work.

- *Shared Instruction.* This Option provides vocational training to students in grades 9-12 on a part-time basis. Participating students spend part of the school day at their home school and then travel to one of 14 Shared Instruction sites.

- *Adult Education Classes.* These classes provide vocational training primarily to adults who are 21 or older, but students as young as 17 may participate. Although Shared Instruction provides daytime vocational classes to groups of high school students, Adult Education Classes are held nightly and Saturdays to accommodate the schedules of its largely adult population.

- *Independent Study.* This Option allows individual students in grades 9-12 to work independently in order to earn course credit. There are three types of Independent Study: paper and pencil courses; computer-assisted instruction; and mentoring/internships.

- *Work Experience Credit.* This Option allows students to earn credit for part-time work. Students must be at least 16 years old and have a part-time job for a minimum of 15 hours per week for 15 weeks or 225 hours per term. Cooperative education coordinators help students structure their jobs to meet related high school credit requirements.

- *Community College Classes.* These classes allow students in grades 9-12 to attend courses on a college campus and earn high school credits. Students are allowed to "bank" their credits from the community college when they graduate from high school and enroll in that college.

## Numbers of Participating Schools and Students

During the 1992-93 school year, there were 30,484 students enrolled in Independent Study, 13,832 enrolled in PM School, and 3,043 enrolled in Shared Instruction.

In 1992-93, students from all 32 Project Achieve schools enrolled in PM School, Evening School, and Summer School. Students from six other schools enrolled in PM School, students from 71 other schools enrolled in Evening School, and students from 71 other schools enrolled in Summer School.

In 1992-93, students from 91 schools enrolled in Independent Study, students from 39 schools enrolled in Work Experience Credit, and students from 30 schools enrolled in Community College Classes. There were 14 vocational schools that offered Shared Instruction and students from at least 42 schools participated in this Option.

## Design Issues

***Student needs.*** ConCurrent Options helps schools to better meet the needs of their students. At Prospect Heights High School, for example, about 80 percent of the students must take at least one remedial class. The school offers PM School, Independent Study, and Shared Instruction (along with AM School and Saturday School, which are not formally part of ConCurrent Options). These options help students remain on track to graduate in four years; otherwise, their noncredit remedial classes would put them behind schedule for graduation.

At George Washington High School, 90 percent of the students are bilingual. Many of them are required to take three unaccredited ESL courses in addition to satisfying the standard diploma requirements. This requirement increases the amount of time they must spend taking courses and the likelihood that they will leave school before they graduate. The school offers PM School, Work Experience Credit, Adult Education Classes, and Community College Classes as options to help students remain on track to graduate in four years.

***Support from faculty.*** The amount of support provided by teachers and administrators affects the implementation of ConCurrent Options in their schools. Before options were introduced at Sarah J. Hale High School, faculty members expressed concerns that they would reduce the number of regular school day courses and eliminate teaching positions. The ConCurrent Options coordinator at the school allayed the faculty's concerns by seeking their input and assuring them that neither their courses nor their jobs were in jeopardy. The school now offers PM School and Independent Study with the full support of the faculty.

Recognizing the need for broad-based support, the program coordinator at Newtown High School strove from the outset to enlist the support of faculty members, students, and parents. The faculty decided to define "at-risk" as "salvageable," and a selection process was developed to identify "salvageable" students and match them with various options. Department chairs have been involved in developing guidelines for and assessing the course content of Independent Study. The school also offers PM School, Work Experience Credit, and Community College Classes.

## Implementation Issues.

***Teacher compensation.*** Teachers in the ConCurrent Options program are paid at a per-session rate of $28 per hour, but they do not receive benefits or retirement, and their work does not count toward career advancement. The director of ConCurrent Options explained that the program is cost-effective because "the cost per credit in ConCurrent Options is cheaper than during the regular school day."

The teachers' union and many teachers are critical of ConCurrent Options because they feel it threatens full-time teaching positions, with benefits, that are otherwise protected. A top union official stated, "Our complaint is with salaries. They pay on a per-session rate when it should be on a pro-rated basis. This is education on the cheap." In response, the program director commented, "It obviously costs more to pay on a pro-rated basis, but full-time teachers are usually the ones working in the program."

***Student selection.*** Ideally, guidance counselors would be able to identify appropriate candidates and talk with them about the ways that specific options could help them achieve their educational goals. In practice, though, guidance counselors often do not have the individual student data needed to identify probable candidates. As a result, in many schools enrollment in ConCurrent Options depends on students' awareness of the program and their persistence in completing the enrollment process.

***Academic standards.*** Accreditation committees in many high schools review proposed ConCurrent Options courses to ensure they will meet the school's academic standards. Although a state law was passed about 20 years ago that required all high schools in New York to establish accreditation committees, these committees were perfunctory for a long period of time. According to the director of ConCurrent Options, "the accreditation committees have taken on a more important role in many schools since the ConCurrent options program was implemented in 1987." As a result of the program, committees in many schools have started actively monitoring the academic standards of ConCurrent Options courses and regular courses.

Despite this monitoring activity, the teachers' union has expressed concern about the academic standards of ConCurrent Options. The union official pointed out that some schools do not have accreditation committees. He would like to see better enforcement of the state law requiring each school to establish an accreditation committee. The union is particularly concerned about Independent Study because students only meet with their supervising teachers once a week. The union official questioned whether students "who don't learn in a structured environment" will "learn in an unstructured environment."

## Impacts and Outcomes

ConCurrent Options allows students to earn academic credit in alternative learning situations, helps prevent students from leaving school before they graduate, and preserves teaching positions. During the 1992-93 school year, students earned approximately 115,000 credits in ConCurrent Options. There were approximately 60,000 credits earned in Summer School, 21,183 credits earned in Independent Study, 10,931 credits earned in PM School, and 5,328 credits earned in Shared Instruction. In 1991-92, the dropout rate in the 32 Project Achieve schools was only 5.2 percent.

ConCurrent Options also allows faculty members to promote alternative practices in their classrooms and throughout their schools. For example, PM School classes at DeWitt Clinton High School are significantly different from classes during the regular school day. Teachers and students in PM School use themes to organize curriculum and instruction and take an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning. Meeting twice a week for two hours at a time allows them to engage in a variety of activities.

At Prospect Heights High School, the implementation of ConCurrent Options coincided with a transformation of the entire school. In the 1980s, Prospect Heights had seven principals over a period of five years and many expected that the school would be closed. During the past six years, though, teachers and administrators have developed a safe and orderly school. The current principal, who has been credited with turning the school around, commented, "School can't start at nine and go to three. We go from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. plus Saturday School."

## Resources

In the 32 Project Achieve schools, ConCurrent Options is financed with state funds under Project Achieve, which is part of the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program. Each Project Achieve school receives approximately $90,000 each year from the state. The state funds have remained constant over the past seven years, not accounting for inflation or program growth. Many of these schools supplement their state allotment with funds from their regular operating budget. The other 93 schools that offer options finance them with their own funds.

The primary expense involved with operating ConCurrent Options is compensating teachers and guidance counselors. Teachers are paid on a per-session basis at a rate of $28 per hour; guidance counselors receive $30 per hour when they work beyond their regular work schedule. Other expenses are related to operating school buildings and compensating other personnel. Because all school buildings remain open until 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, there are no additional costs for most options. For those options that meet after 5:00, the Board of Education uses money from its own budget to pay for the costs of operating the buildings and compensating support and maintenance personnel.

It costs roughly the same amount of money to compensate teachers for P.M. School, Shared Instruction, Evening School, Summer School, and Adult Education Classes, according to the program director. It costs less to pay teachers who supervise students enrolled in Independent Study or students involved in Work Experience Credit. Although Community College Classes technically cost more than the other options, the cost is often offset by participating institutions.

The school district and the teachers' union have different attitudes about the future of ConCurrent Options. The teachers' union believes that it should remain a dropout prevention program rather than become a program for all students to earn credits through alternative learning situations. The director of ConCurrent Options stated, "In the long term, I think the school system will incorporate many components of the program."

# GIRARD COLLEGE

## Overview and Context

Girard College is a private, full-scholarship residential school serving 551 students in grades 1-12. Located in Philadelphia, it opened in 1848 with support from the estate of a wealthy mariner, merchant, and banker. His concern for the poor and his strong paternal instincts prompted him to provide for the founding of the school to serve "white orphan boys" and to support the school in perpetuity. Subsequently, civil rights considerations and financial constraints have led to changes in the composition of the student body, the amount of time students spend on campus, and the role parents and guardians play in students' out-of-school lives.

The school desegregated in 1968 following a ten-year court battle. It began to admit girls in 1984 and the class of 1993 was the first to graduate females. Today, the school defines its target population as orphans or youth coming from single-parent homes, who are of average intelligence and who have no serious behavioral problems. First priority is given to youth from Philadelphia, followed by those residing in the state of Pennsylvania, and finally, those from the mid-Atlantic region of the country.

Youth can now enter the school at any point from age six to 14; this is a change from earlier years when no students were admitted after their twelfth birthday. An admissions officer and staff handle the admissions process, but there is little need for active recruitment at this time. Most applicants hear about the school through "word of mouth" from family members or alumni. About 20 percent of the students have siblings or cousins in the school. Most often, the initial inquiry is made by a parent, grandparent or other family member, or guardian. There has been some active outreach to Hispanics, Caucasians, and Asians to increase diversity in the school.

Although there is no specific eligibility standard, most of Girard's students are from economically disadvantaged homes; 60 percent are eligible for Medicaid, and the school now participates in the Chapter 1/Title I program. In the 1993-94 school year, 45 percent of the students were female and 74 percent were African American.

Girard College is located on a beautiful, large walled campus in Philadelphia, in one of the most depressed urban neighborhoods in the country. The city's public school district suffers from the typical problems that beset large urban districts, including low achievement, a high dropout rate, many antiquated buildings, and increasing violence. Thus, for many parents and guardians of disadvantaged children, Girard is a compelling option.

The campus of Girard College is an oasis in the midst of urban decay. The centerpiece of the campus is Founders Hall, designed as a small version of the Parthenon. The campus includes classroom and office buildings, dormitories, a library, a chapel, an armory that holds a large gymnasium, running track, and other lounges or meeting rooms. Two swimming pools are located in another building; both are used in the college's instructional and recreational programs. There are also playing fields, tennis courts, and a playground with equipment for the younger children. The campus is substantial, old, reasonably well equipped, but far from luxurious.

## The Nature of the Program

### Key Characteristics

As a residential school, Girard offers students a monitored, safe, and somewhat structured environment for 24 hours a day, five days a week. Weekend leave has been a feature of campus life for more than 20 years. Prior to that, the students remained on campus seven days a week except for vacations. Due to financial constraints, students are now required to go home on weekends. The exceptions are about 25 to 30 students who either live too far away or are required to stay on campus for disciplinary reasons.

Out-of-classroom time at Girard is structured around many activities, both recreational and educational. There is supervised homework time and opportunities for youth to have significant relationships with adults, including houseparents, activity supervisors who may be teachers or houseparents, other staff at the school, and volunteers who serve as mentors and tutors. Some of the specific characteristics of the uses of out-of-classroom time at Girard include the following:

- Rules governing responsible behavior, including those prohibiting smoking, drugs, drinking, and sexual intimacy, and rules stressing school attendance and punctuality.
- A heavy emphasis on homework and study skills. Homework time is strictly regulated and closely monitored. Only high school students with the highest grade point averages are allowed to do homework independently or unsupervised. Only students in good standing--both academic and behavioral--can participate in afterschool sports and other activities. The library is available for independent study use or for supervised homework.
- A variety of afterschool extracurricular activities for students that are well attended. These include choir, band, student council and student government, a full scouting program, a

school newspaper, a yearbook, a chapter of the National Honor Society, drama club, debate club, and girls and boys intramural and interscholastic athletics (soccer, cross-country, basketball, wrestling, and cheerleading).

- Tutoring and mentoring opportunities, including some offered by teachers and older students as well as groups from the off-campus community.
- Students begin at an early age to assume responsibility for themselves and the community. Beginning in the elementary grades, students help serve meals and keep their rooms clean. All seniors are required to perform 30 hours of community service, some of which is on-campus with younger students and some of which is off-campus.

## Design Issues

To this day, the very specific last-will-and-testament of Girard College's founder strongly defines the school's character. Its purpose has always been "to educate the poor and place them, by the early cultivation of their minds and the development of their moral principals, above the many temptations to which, through poverty and ignorance, they are exposed."

***Organization and staffing.*** The school is divided into three divisions: Elementary (grades 1-5); middle school (grades 6-8); and high school (grades 9-12). There is one Head of School and one Director of Education; each division has an educational coordinator and residential coordinator who supervise a staff of teachers or house parents respectively. The school employs a psychologist, a medical staff, kitchen workers, a maintenance staff, and a security staff. At present, there are a total of 208 people on staff, down from 335 due to a recent budget crisis.

Teachers say that they like the environment, the students, and the working conditions, although the salaries are considerably lower than at other schools. Despite the fact that they like teaching at the school, many teachers leave after a few years, citing low salaries as the reason.

***Governance.*** The school is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors of City Trusts, the group that oversees the estate of the founder and the $175 million dollar trust. Board members are appointed for life. The board concerns itself primarily with matters of school finance and general policy. Two board committees meet with the Head of School monthly on substantive and policy issues. Recently the board recommended offering fewer vocational education courses because few students pursue vocational careers. In addition, the board, in consultation with the administration, made the decision that students should go home every weekend as a cost-saving measure.

***Academic program.*** Historically, Girard College had a strong vocational emphasis and offered a "practical education," but that has changed over time. Overall, the school's traditional academic program offers a prescribed course of study and features traditional classroom management and instruction. The elementary school has self-contained classrooms, except for the subject area specialists who teach in various locations throughout the campus. The middle school classes are structured as traditional 45-minute periods. Despite its name, the middle school has only recently begun to adopt some of the "middle school" concepts such as grade level teams, interdisciplinary courses, and some flexible scheduling. High school classes are also traditional and run in 45-minute periods. The high school is organized by departments and requires four years of English, math, science, social studies, and three years of foreign language. All students also take an industrial arts rotation. There are few electives.

The in-school day runs from 8:20 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the elementary school and from 8:00 a.m. to 2:36 p.m. in the middle and high school divisions. Class sizes are small. The maximum size of a class is 22, and classes as large as this are rare. Many classes have about 18 students. There is an emphasis on communication skills and on the use of standard English. Although the classes are "traditional", the relationship between students and teachers is generally warm and open, and the level of engagement seems high.

***Nonclassroom components.*** The afterschool component of the day is run by the house parents and by some teachers who have responsibility for cocurricular programs. Each houseparent is responsible for 18 to 22 students in the elementary school and 20 to 30 students at the middle school level. There are also part-time aides at the elementary and middle levels. The afterschool time is mainly structured for the younger students, whereas older students can choose how to spend their out-of-school time, provided they are in good academic and behavioral standing. High school students may also get "town passes" in the afternoons. For the older students, the afterschool time spent together builds a strong sense of camaraderie and a social support network with peers.

The interaction between the instructional staff and residential staff is somewhat limited, constrained by contracts and the structure of the workday. Residential staff begin work when teachers leave, and vice versa. There is substantial interaction between the academic and residential coordinators, however, and much of the communication is at that level. House parents do have conferences with teachers three times a year.

Weekend time is governed by other factors now that almost all students go home for the weekend. Younger students are particularly pleased with this change. However, many older students are unhappy and concerns were expressed by some teachers, counselors, and residential staff. Many students go home to crime- and drug-infested neighborhoods, or to situations of abuse. Sometimes students do not know for sure which parent or guardian they will be staying with from one weekend to the next. Many students said that they would prefer to remain at Girard. School staff commented that the transition from home to school can be difficult for students.

***Current restructuring efforts.*** Girard College is in transition, undergoing some substantial restructuring. Propelled in part by a recognition of the needs of a changing population as well as by a fiscal crisis two years ago, the school is beginning a strategic planning process to better define its mission and vision. Because of finances, it had to downsize its staff and now requires that students go home for the weekends (if possible). On the other hand, the school is doing increased outreach to parents and family members, including them more in the educational process. The College offers a STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) course for parents who want to improve their parenting skills.

As part of the restructuring, both the instructional and the residential staff are becoming more involved in planning and decisionmaking. To help in this process, the school has also implemented elements of the Comer School Development Program Model and has organized School Planning and Management Teams in each division. In addition, the middle school house parents and teachers recently began to share a 15-minute community homeroom period from 8:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. every day to improve communications between the staffs. Finally, Girard has also expanded its social skills curriculum and is looking for guidance on more parent involvement.

## Implementation Issues

***Relationship between instructional and residential staff.*** Recent school restructuring has enabled instructional and residential staff to communicate more easily. There is a definite desire to foster more of this type of communication for the benefit of students. Until recently, the Head of School oversaw two separate positions: the head of student life and the head of instructional services. There was little communication between these two divisions, at least not below the division director levels. Now, a new position, the Director of Education, oversees a team of residential and instructional coordinators for each level--elementary, middle, and secondary. The residential and instructional staff occupy offices near each other, and there are more opportunities for formal interaction.

The adoption and implementation of elements of the Comer model (especially the school planning and management teams) have created opportunities for staff to be more involved in planning and decisionmaking, helping to overcome barriers to implementing innovations in time use, which are largely contractual and financial. The contractual time of the instructional and residential staff overlap little, if at all. The financial limitations on joint planning time and activities have been a deterrent to greater interaction between the two components of the program. Administrators and staff feel that the instructional program would benefit from increased staff planning time, and some staff frustration would be alleviated if all were able to solve problems together. There also does not appear to be much in the way of time and resources available for staff development or increased supervision.

***Home-school linkages.*** The role of parents is changing significantly at Girard College. At one point, when parents or guardians brought children to Girard, they literally brought the children's birth certificates along with them, and contributed little else to their education or upbringing for those years. Several teachers noted that in times past, they were not allowed to contact the parents, although now they are encouraged to call parents directly with specific problems, and there is a general movement toward more parent involvement since the school adopted the Comer model. For example, parents are now invited to attend assembly programs, athletic events, dramatic productions, concerts, etc. However, parents are not yet represented on the school management teams, and they come to the school to interact with students or staff only a few times each year. For example, about 50 percent of the parents of elementary students come to meet with teachers after each grading period, and the percentage decreases with the age of the student.

## Impacts and Outcomes

The students at Girard appear to benefit from the school's heavy emphasis on academics, homework, and study skills. SAT scores of Girard students (the vast majority of whom take the test) are about 50 points above the national average. More than 90 percent of the graduates continue on in two-year or four-year colleges, including some elite institutions. Last year, the top three students went to Yale, Duke, and Johns Hopkins. Others opt for the military. We understand, however, that a substantial number do not finish college, some because they are unable to adjust to an impersonal, large campus where they are "a number instead of a person" and others because of financial reasons.

The most striking feature of Girard (and the other residential programs visited for this study) is the sense of community, caring, and family. The main impacts of residential life at Girard are that it provides students with a secure, crime- and drug-free, stable environment in which to study, develop interests, and form meaningful relationships with their peers and with caring adults.

Although there is student turnover, especially through the middle years, the students whole-heartedly believe that if they had to attend their neighborhood public schools, they probably would not be in any school at all, or if they did stay in school, would not learn much. Although they complain about the strictness at Girard, they appreciate the safety.

## Resources

Girard College spends roughly $21,000 per student, per year, for its five-day-per-week residential program. The school is financed through a $175 million dollar trust and is a full scholarship school. Students who are accepted receive full tuition, materials, room and board, uniforms and playclothes, and health care. The families are responsible for travel money and general spending money, although there is some discretionary money for those who need it. The school also receives a federal Chapter 1 grant, an Act 195 state grant, and voluntary services from local community members.

A few years ago, the City Trust faced a financial crisis that resulted in a decrease in available funds for the school. It is unclear whether the financial reversal is temporary, but the issue has stimulated some changes in the school, including greater focus on (1) strategic planning and a process of rethinking the vision and mission of the school, and (2) the needs of a changing population of youth.

# HOLLIBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

Hollibrook Elementary School is located in a predominantly Hispanic, working class neighborhood of Houston, Texas. The district's 125,000 residents are 48 percent white, 36 percent Hispanic, 8 percent Asian American, and 8 percent African American. Approximately 42 percent of the families in the district live in poverty. Hollibrook enrolls approximately 800 students in grades K-5; 88 percent are Hispanic, 9 percent are white, and the remainder are Asian American and African American. Many students are monolingual in Spanish when they enroll. Ninety-two percent of all students receive free or reduced-price lunch. Hollibrook runs a Chapter 1 schoolwide project.

The school adopted the Accelerated Schools Program (ASP) in 1989 and began a restructuring process that sought to address some of the school's many problems. Specifically, students lacked discipline; academic achievement was low, and discouraged; and unmotivated teachers held negative opinions about the school and its students. In addition, there was little parental involvement, and the school's relationship with the surrounding community was somewhat adversarial.

Since 1989 the school's reform efforts have evolved and expanded as school administrators, teachers, and parents have taken specific steps to turn the school around and to address these pressing problems. For example, they have: (1) introduced a more challenging curriculum and varied approaches to instruction; (2) created a program of in-school and afterschool enrichment activities for students; (3) granted teachers increased autonomy over school-level decisionmaking; and (4) implemented strategies to increase parental involvement with the school.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

Hollibrook's programmatic innovations fall under three broad categories: (1) curriculum and instruction; (2) afterschool activities and expanded learning opportunities; and (3) parental involvement. Descriptions of innovations in each of these areas are presented below.

***Curriculum and instruction.*** One of the first steps taken by the Hollibrook faculty in 1989 was to replace the school district's mathematics and language curriculum with a curriculum that emphasizes whole language, critical thinking, and problemsolving skills. In abandoning the district's curriculum, Hollibrook's teachers were forced to gather and organize their own materials and develop more interesting and challenging lessons on their own, or in cooperation with other teachers. Interestingly, within two years, the entire school district adopted a new curriculum that embraced the changes that had been made at Hollibrook during the first year as an ASP.

The programs described here were created in response to the school's shift to ASP and the faculty's desire to enhance curriculum and instruction at the school. Several staff members noted that these changes were facilitated by the fact that teachers and administrators have embraced school-based management, and school district administrators have allowed the faculty and staff at Hollibrook to pursue the strategies they deem necessary to ensure the success of their students, with very little outside interference.

Hollibrook has modified and restructured the school day, developing several initiatives that are not present in other district schools. For example: (1) teachers are not required to follow a rigid schedule and may spend as long as they need on any subject area during the course of the day; (2) mixed-age grouping, team teaching, and cross-age tutoring are all used by teachers at various times to enhance instruction; (3) teachers rely on a teacher-designed numerical sorting system to ensure that students are not grouped by ability, and that each class has a diverse range of skills and abilities represented; and (4) teachers may elect to follow their students from one grade-level to the next when they believe consistency and a deepening of the teacher-student relationship will bring added benefits to a particular class.

Other features of the academic program include:

***Two-way developmental bilingual program.*** This program honors linguistic and cultural diversity within the school, provides effective instruction to monolingual students, and promotes bilingualism among all students. Classes are team taught by two teachers who provide instruction in both English and Spanish. Students from both language groups work together in centers or groups to accomplish the same tasks. Groups typically feature two bilingual and two monolingual students who work together as a foursome.

***Mixed-age groups.*** Mixed-aged grouping is also practiced in several classrooms. In one class, in grades 1-3 examined a range of issues and topics of interest to them. For example, one series of lessons explored various jobs and careers, and students learned about the required qualifications and job responsibilities associated with each. Classroom activities and discussions were supplemented with field trips that allowed students to see adults at work in their chosen professions.

Multi-age grouping also occurs on the Conflict Resolution Team. Students in grades 4-5 are elected by their classmates to become members of this team. They are formally trained by the school social worker, school counselor, and outside consultants to provide assistance to their fellow students when fights and other types of conflicts arise during the course of the school day.

> ***Portfolio assessment.*** Hollibrook recently began to use portfolios to demonstrate and record each student's progress in language arts and mathematics. In addition, teachers from Hollibrook have tried to encourage other teachers, particularly those in the district's middle schools who are less familiar with the process, to consider this method of assessment when determining the class placement of Hollibrook students. Several high schools in the district have also indicated a desire to adopt portfolio assessment.
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> ***Technology.*** In 1992, the school hired a full-time computer specialist as a resource for teachers. Teachers are trained in small groups of two or three individuals, and sessions are scheduled for an entire day in the school's computer laboratory. Substitute teachers are hired to cover the classes of those in training. The training sessions have helped teachers to more effectively use computer technology in improving instruction across the curriculum.
>
> Plans for the creation of a television studio at the school were under way during the 1992-93 academic year. The principal hopes that as students research, write, and report on news stories, they will begin to make connections between their learning in school and the "real world."

***Enrichment activities.*** In addition to concerns about the formal academic program, Hollibrook's faculty and staff were also troubled by the fact that most of their low-income students had few opportunities to participate in educational activities outside of the school and were therefore not exposed to many of the enriching activities that their more affluent peers in other communities take for granted. There are few organized and affordable afterschool or summer programs available in the community around the school, and although a few students travel to Mexico or attend summer day camps during vacations, the majority remain at home. Homework, shopping, watching television, and playing with friends are the typical afterschool, weekend, and summertime activities. The need for additional recreational opportunities and enrichment activities for students became even more acute when a gang-related shooting occurred near the school and elevated parents' concerns about their children's safety during nonschool hours.

The school has tried to meet students' needs for additional learning opportunities as well as for a structured, safe afterschool program, by introducing Fabulous Friday and the After School Activities Program (ASAP).

> ***Fabulous Friday.*** Teachers are required to submit a proposal at the beginning of the semester describing the mini-course they will teach every Friday; car maintenance, violin lessons, gardening, and pet care are among the host of diverse offerings. Each Friday, students attend one of these hour-and-a-half-long enrichment classes instead of their regular academic class. Course sessions meet for at least four weeks and at the end of each session, students may select another course for the next period. They can choose from any of the courses offered, and as a result, the classes feature mixed-aged groups.

Each class emphasizes problemsolving and analytical thinking, in addition to the specific new craft or skill being taught. Students are encouraged to work together cooperatively in completing tasks. In one pet care class that we observed, students in grades 1-2 were instructed to draw a picture of something they had observed during their field trip to a veterinary clinic the previous week; students in grades 3-5 were told to write thank-you letters to the clinic staff. These activities were followed by a classroom visit from a veterinarian who brought along several cats in order to demonstrate correct pet care procedures. In other classes, teachers repeatedly asked students to explain their reasoning in deciding on specific approaches to completing different tasks and solving specific problems (e.g., steps in transplanting several types of flowers), or they pointed out to their students how specific academic knowledge and skills were being used to complete various recreational tasks (e.g., math skills in measuring and cutting ribbon to make hair ornaments).

*ASAP.* On three afternoons each week, students may remain at school for an extra hour-and-a-half to participate in supervised afterschool activities that include a homework/tutoring period, computer instruction, baseball, basketball, volleyball, and dance. Snacks are served. Approximately 200 students attend at least one session each week. Students are grouped according to age, and each group spends half of the time in recreational activities while the other half is reserved for completing homework or receiving academic assistance. At the end of each session, students either walk home in groups or are driven home by parents who have formed carpools for this purpose.

The principal and staff of Hollibrook are currently exploring the possibility of introducing 60-20 or 45-15 year-round schedule at the school. Although these plans do not call for additional time in school beyond the present 180 days, many staff members believe that eliminating the long summer vacation--during which time students are often left idle, bored, and/or unsupervised--will prove beneficial.

***Parent involvement.*** The parents of many Hollibrook students are recent immigrants to the United States. They are often reluctant to become involved in school activities because of their limited English and because they are often intimidated by the prospect of interacting with individuals in a school setting that is somewhat alien to them. In an effort to encourage more parental involvement, specific roles have been created for parents, and the school also offers them several special services. Hollibrook's Parent Center is staffed by two social workers who play a crucial role in this effort. For example: (1) they provide referrals for needed social services; (2) they recruit and coordinate parent volunteers to help in the classrooms, with ASAP, and in other school activities; and (3) they sponsor parent seminars and classes on a range of topics, including financial planning, substance abuse, computer literacy, and tenants' rights.

## Design Issues

Current efforts to improve the quality of education and expand learning opportunities beyond the traditional school day were, in many ways, an outgrowth of the Accelerated School Program. The spirit of reform and all that it entails (e.g., shared decisionmaking, autonomy from district mandates) inspired and supported many of the changes that occurred at Hollibrook. The faculty and staff work closely in arriving at decisions, and communication and debate are encouraged. The school's principal also emphasized that opportunities for input from all staff members are provided. As evidence of this, we saw notes on the wall of the school's conference room which indicated that, in a recent meeting, school staff had debated the pros and cons of introducing year-round education at Hollibrook and explored various solutions to the problem of "latch-key children" who go home to an empty house or apartment after school.

The principal noted that much of the school's success can be attributed to its talented and dedicated staff. Most teachers do not view work and responsibilities that last beyond the regular school day as something "extra." It is just widely accepted that the job requires more than an 8:00 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. schedule," one teacher commented. In addition to their instructional responsibilities, Hollibrook's teachers also share some responsibilities, such as hiring decisions, with the school's administrators. In each interview of potential new teachers, every effort is made to inform them of all that working at Hollibrook entails. The teachers acknowledge that Hollibrook is not for everyone, and by controlling the hiring process, they are able to ensure that those who share--or are willing to adopt--their vision for the school are hired.

Although teacher support and willingness to "go the extra mile" without additional compensation has contributed significantly to the successful implementation of new programs and activities at Hollibrook, everyone is aware that a heavy reliance on volunteerism among the staff is not a secure foundation on which to build the future of their programs. The school has therefore begun to give some consideration to how teacher time may be rescheduled or how additional funding may be secured to reward those who currently donate their personal time to various school-related endeavors.

One plan being considered for increasing teacher participation in ASAP--without increasing their workload significantly--and enhancing enrichment opportunities for students is to combine Fabulous Friday with ASAP. The Director of ASAP explained that under this proposal, each teacher would have one afterschool class per week, but would be released early on another day. On the early release day, his or her class would be covered by another teacher. The director pointed out that the principal's willingness to arrange for a substitute teacher to cover some of her own classes has allowed her to take the necessary time off to plan and organize ASAP; this arrangement has made her leadership of the program possible.

## Implementation Issues

Nearly every new initiative that has been implemented at Hollibrook in recent years has required teachers to volunteer more of their time and/or expertise. Thus, for many, the fear of "burning out" is real. The governance and administrative responsibilities associated with being an Accelerated School (e.g., cadre meetings, steering committee meetings, grade-level planning meetings) make it impossible for many teachers, particularly those with families, to volunteer any additional time to ASAP. Meetings and planning sessions already require teachers to remain at school past 5 p.m. for three or four days each week. As one teacher explained, "It is particularly difficult for teachers in a site-base managed school to also get involved in afterschool activities with students." Teachers who must limit their involvement (i.e., those with young children of their own), feel some guilt about it; however, there is a general understanding that the faculty are at different ages and stages of their personal and professional lives and do as much as they can.

As a result of these time-related pressures, ASAP has relied heavily on parent volunteers. In addition, volunteers from a nearby high school also assist in supervising the students. The teachers who are able to sponsor activities during ASAP are primarily young and unmarried; several admitted that if they had family responsibilities it would make participation in ASAP almost impossible for them.

ASAP is directed by a board made up of the director and three parents. Plans to add more classes and an extra day to the program are under way; however, problems with staffing remain. When the program was started in January 1993, large numbers of parent volunteers showed up to assist. Unfortunately, the program was not fully organized at that time, and many parents had no clear roles or responsibilities. Many stopped coming in the mistaken belief that they were not really needed; getting them to return has proven to be difficult.

The need for a rescheduled workday was voiced on several occasions. One teacher who had been very active in school governance explained her reason for cutting back. She stated: "Time must be restructured because if you are dead on your feet, wise decisions cannot be made." The principal, noting the many needs of the students, and the lack of resources in homes and the community, stated: "We really need to extend the school day; there just isn't enough time in the current school day for needed enrichment." The tension between rising student needs and shrinking staff availability continues to present a problem.

## Impacts and Outcomes

The Accelerated Schools Program, the Two-Way Developmental Bilingual Program, Fabulous Friday, ASAP, and the various parent involvement initiatives have all been linked to many positive changes at Hollibrook. In October 1992, the school was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the only "A+ Breaking the Mold" elementary school in the state of Texas, and in contrast to a few years ago, teachers, parents, and students are now pleased to be associated with Hollibrook. The sense of ownership and pride that parents now feel toward the school was recently demonstrated when a large group of parents travelled by bus to the district office and successfully protested against proposed boundary changes that would have resulted in their children being moved to another school.

Other kinds of positive impacts cited by Hollibrook staff include a decrease in student mobility, higher levels of student self-confidence and self-esteem (e.g., among Spanish-speaking students who have been able to assist their monolingual peers in the bilingual development program), improved behavior, the acquisition of new skills (e.g., playing the violin, gardening, crafts) through Fabulous Friday, and an overall improvement in student attitudes toward learning.

Student performances on different standardized tests have shown mixed patterns of achievement. The principal explained that the variations in test scores are a result of the fact that Hollibrook's limited-English proficient students--who often cannot read English adequately--are required to take some standardized tests but not others. In September 1993, the state of Texas ruled for the first time that students in bilingual and ESL programs will not be required to take the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test when it is offered in May 1994.

In an early article on the effects of restructuring at Hollibrook, its former principal reported that between 1988 and 1991, the reading and language arts scores for fifth-grade students had increased by close to two grade levels, and in mathematics, the scores had increased by one grade level. Limited-English proficient students were not required to take this test.

## Resources

The costs associated with Hollibrook's reform and restructuring efforts have forced them to seek financial assistance from community agencies, foundations, and businesses. These additional resources have been relatively modest, but necessary. More than $45,000 has already been donated and used to fund various activities and programs, including: (1) Reading is Fundamental, which provides all Hollibrook students with three books of their own each year; (2) staff development for teachers; and (3) equipment and materials for Fabulous Friday and ASAP. In addition, many families donated a dollar each to help finance the initial startup costs for ASAP, and several local businesses have donated food items for snacks. A nearby apartment complex also gave the school a gift of $500 for the program.

Plans for expanding or improving the school's various initiatives are dependent on their ability to continue to attract extra financial support from these various sources. Currently, the school avoids some expenses by relying heavily on parent and teacher volunteers. In addition, they have had to make some sacrifices. For example, although a state grant for $29,000 was used to purchase new computer equipment and software for students, the school was able to hire a computer training specialist only after it had eliminated several instructional assistant positions.

# METRO HIGH SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

Metro High School is an alternative school--and now a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools since 1985--created to provide a second chance for high school dropouts in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. In 1974 three teachers began working with 40 students in a red brick firehouse. By 1978, the school expanded to include an additional campus on the other side of town. In 1982, both campuses merged into a newly renovated building. Today, Metro High School has 34 certified teachers (two lead teachers and 32 classroom teachers) and 10 paraprofessionals who work with more than 600 students in grades 9-12. The teaching faculty is relatively stable; most teachers have been at Metro for five or more years. The school culture is well established, and, although there is no formal induction process for new teachers, the established routines serve to enculturate. A principal, four secretaries, a building engineer, and two custodians round out the staff.

The majority of Metro students enroll at the recommendation of a counselor or administrator from a traditional school. About 78 percent of new students in any given school year come from one of the district's three conventional high schools or six middle schools. Around 20 percent of Metro's students have enrolled after being discharged from one of the state's residential treatment centers, after being assigned to one of the community's group homes, or at the request of the juvenile justice system. Two percent enroll at Metro with no outside referral; most of them have been out of school (dropped out) for an extended period of time. The student body at Metro High School has slightly more minority students than other district schools (14 percent compared with 9 percent) and considerably more students living in poverty. The school faculty estimate that 70 percent of Metro students live in poverty; 25 percent of the district's students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Most of Metro's students face severe challenges in completing school and starting their adult lives with the skills they will need to live healthy, independent, and productive lives. According to school documents, well over half work; some hold full-time jobs while finishing their secondary education. Many come from dysfunctional families and lead unstable home lives. Roughly 38 percent of female students are either pregnant or parenting. Nearly 25 percent of all students live on their own or in a residential program. The faculty estimate that 60 percent are adjudicated youth or children in need of social services and other support. Approximately 15 percent have handicapping conditions, but they are fully mainstreamed and expected to participate in and complete the school curriculum. Student mobility is very high; at least half of the school's enrollment turns over every year. Some students drop out and then show up again a month or six months later.

Cedar Rapids is a largely white, middle-class city. Racial/ethnic minorities account for less than 3 percent of the city's population of 115,000. Although the city is prosperous, it has low-income areas, drugs, and violence that plague many urban areas. However, according to the 1990 U.S. Census, the city has the tenth lowest high school dropout rate among the top 250 cities in the country. A recent editorial in the local newspaper attributes this fact to the district's ability to lure many dropouts back to class at Metro High School.

In many ways, Metro High School is an island unto itself. The teachers and administrators rarely mention the school district and, when asked explicitly about its influence on Metro High, most say that it is limited. Metro has developed its alternative curriculum and school schedule almost independently, although the central office gives its support. Most of the faculty report that the district's political concerns and bureaucratic structures have had little influence on Metro's driving philosophy and evolving program. This independence is not without its drawbacks. For example, Metro teachers complain that district curriculum coordinators often forget to count Metro as one of the district's four high schools when ordering and distributing instructional supplies. "We constantly have to remind them that we are here and that we are a district school just like the other three," said one teacher.

## The Nature of the Innovation

Metro High School's success is related to the ways that it has manipulated both the quantity and quality of school time. Less daily class time within an extended-time frame for earning a diploma are obvious quantity issues. Metro has also reconfigured the way that school time is used. We discuss these quantity and quality alterations below.

### Key Characteristics

***Less daily class time and expanded time frame in which to earn a high school diploma***. The class schedule for Metro High School students is a half-day--either morning or afternoon--Monday through Thursday, with Friday off. The morning schedule runs from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and the afternoon schedule from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.; each half-day schedule has four class sessions. One result of the shortened daily class schedule is that most students do not graduate "on time," or within the four years traditionally associated with grades 9-12. But, the school philosophy holds that it is better for a student to get a high school diploma in five or six years than not at all. At any given time, about three-quarters of Metro students are enrolled in the regular high school program; one-fourth are enrolled in the GED program, viewed by faculty as the last resort.

Teachers help students select the session that best fits their work schedule and bio-rhythms. "If a kid is going to miss most of his classes because he can't get himself up in the morning, then he should be enrolled in the afternoon session," explained one teacher. This perspective does not presume that school is the only/main event in its students' lives; Metro acknowledges that students' out-of-school time is filled in many cases with serious adult responsibilities. Many of Metro's students, for example, must work, raise children, report to probation officers, attend drug treatment programs, or participate in other nonschool activities. The role of the school then is to help the students become better prepared to meet their responsibilities.

Students appreciate that the alternative school acknowledges their out-of-school lives. "I couldn't go to the other high school," explained one. "I work full time and [the traditional school] just doesn't understand that. The teachers there treat you like children." A teacher later explained that this student had left an abusive home in another state to live with her fiance, who also works. The student had recently been "promoted" by the manager at her place of employment to run the cash register, a responsibility with which she probably would not have been entrusted as a part-time worker.

***Reconfigured faculty time and roles***. Teachers' time is configured so that they spend less time focused on pure academic instruction and spend more time attending to students' social, emotional, and employment needs. Teachers also work together to continue developing the school, including designing interdisciplinary courses and alternative assessment procedures, hammering out their new relationship to the Coalition of Essential Schools, and finding the most efficient access to other professional networks. Much of this work occurs on Fridays, when students do not attend school.

Each Friday begins with a structured meeting at which all faculty discuss positive events from the week; share concerns about individual students, including attendance and problems that need immediate attention; listen to a faculty presentation (e.g., on AIDS awareness); and share announcements of upcoming events. After the meeting, teachers fan out into the community to visit individual students at their homes or places of employment. The teachers' Friday ends back at the school where they meet in one large group or smaller clusters to address pressing concerns. This alternative use of teachers' time is linked with several nontraditional roles.

- ***Teacher as student advisor***. The student characteristics discussed above, in combination with the faculty's belief that students must develop a strong attachment to school in order to make the commitment to attend and learn, underscore the importance of Metro's advisor group arrangement. Every teacher serves as an advisor for 15 to 25 students. The advisor visits each advisee at home or at work at least once every trimester in order to listen to and help solve personal problems or just to visit. Advisors also mete out disciplinary action as deemed necessary by the school faculty.

- ***Teacher as academic coach.*** Metro became a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools through the initial interest of one teacher and a lot of faculty debate. "Our connection with the Coalition has helped us develop philosophically," point out members of the math/science curriculum team. "We now tend to think of teachers as coaches and students as workers and we try to organize our classes that way." Students exercise a lot of discretion in shaping their classroom work, with teachers serving as a resource and support person, but not as the primary source of knowledge.

- ***Teacher as researcher and problemsolver.*** Metro is also a participant of the Mastery Learning Project--a computerized communications network for teachers seeking to share and find innovative ideas--that is sponsored by the National Education Association. Thus far, the faculty has been unable to take full advantage of this network, primarily because of insufficient time to harvest and contribute to the network's potential. Nonetheless, the inclination to view themselves as researchers and active contributors to their profession's knowledge base appears to be strong.

***Competency-based curriculum.*** Students are required to develop competencies through their work at Metro High School, not just accrue "seat time" in order to earn a diploma. Metro is accredited by the North Central Association (NCA), so Metro students, like all other district students who want to achieve a high school diploma, must meet state and local graduation requirements in terms of mandated courses and credit hours. Although students who attend the traditional high schools get a letter grade for each course and five credits no matter what the grade (except "F"), Metro students receive a narrative analysis of their performance for each course and the number of credits that the teacher feels they have earned through their demonstrated learning. Faculty members continue to assess and refine their guidelines for evaluating and awarding credit for student work. By their own admission, they are not yet satisfied with their procedures, but they all agree that competence, not simply attendance, is the outcome they want students to strive for and achieve. According to the superintendent, because the district administrators have been willing to "educate state monitors," the three-hour school day has not become an issue that interferes with the conferring of high school diplomas.

The most obvious example of this belief in demonstrated competency is the requirement that all seniors take a course entitled *Prepare to Graduate*. *Prepare to Graduate* is a competency-based course designed around exhibitions of mastery and a final performance. The students' final performance is derived from their final research paper and conducted before a selected audience of students and faculty. During the 1993 winter trimester, students investigated racism, the Equal Rights Amendment, the Spanish Inquisition, the needs of America's elderly citizens, runaway children, and other issues in the *Prepare to Graduate* course.

***Interdisciplinary instruction and language arts across the curriculum.*** Interdisciplinary classes, that are often team taught, include *Language Arts and U.S. History*; *Mythology and Astronomy*; and *Prepare to Graduate*. In addition, the four language arts are stressed in all classes, from creative writing to science and math. According to several teachers, the result of this language-arts-infused curriculum is that, on average, Metro students spend a greater proportion of time reading, writing, and discussing their work than do students in the city's traditional high schools. Metro has published more than six volumes of *Lines and Shadows--The Metro Magazine of Student Art and Writing*.

"Vocademics" courses are central to Metro's interdisciplinary curriculum with its emphasis on preparation for life after high school. The vocademics curriculum combines academic work with vocational education in courses such as *Bake-A-Teria* (a class in which students learn how to bake and run a small business by baking for the community), *Metro Laundry*, *Metro Parent-Child Center* (a childcare center for children of Metro students and faculty), *Metro Bicycle Repair Shop*, and the *Recycling Program*. All students have access to the vocademics program. All vocademics classes teach job-performance expectations and provide on-the-job experiences. Selected students receive payment for their work in vocademics classes.

Metro's School-to-Work Program is by nature interdisciplinary. Students learn how to apply academic learning to work while they earn up to five hours of elective credit. Metro's work-experience coordinator confers with employers to assess the student's performance and assist in teaching employability skills. The cornerstone of the school-to-work program is a set of career development opportunities that include: day-long job shadowing opportunities, one- or two-week internships, visits to companies, industries, and organizations that offer entry-level career positions, fieldtrips to community colleges and universities, assistance in applying to any college or university (including completion of financial forms), counseling for job training, career, and college.

A striking aspect of conversations with Metro High School faculty is the perspective that the school and the faculty's work are still evolving, despite the school's 20 years of existence. Some design issues--such as the need for small class size and broad faculty involvement in students' lives--were decided to everyone's satisfaction years ago. But some implementation issues--such as student resistance to innovation and appropriate and adequate assessment strategies--require constant attention and a will and ability to solve problems as they arise. We discuss both design and implementation issues below.

## Design Issues

*Small class size*. One of the arrangements that allows teachers to provide special individualized attention to students is small average class size. An average class at Metro has about 15 students, compared with a district high school average of 25. With the average daily attendance at 65 to 70 percent, however, actual class size is closer to 10. According to Metro faculty, small class sizes are essential to their mission to make every kid a member of the school community. Individual attention from adults is key. Even the principal engages in discussions with and about individual students and their home situations.

*Faculty authority and autonomy*. Metro High School is organized to give the teaching faculty more responsibility for knowing students and guiding their education than is typically the case in traditional high schools; with that responsibility comes authority and autonomy. For example:

- ***Metro hires its own staff through a school-based faculty hiring committee.*** This arrangement allows Metro faculty to hire only faculty members who want to work at Metro and who share the school's approaches to teaching and school administration.

- ***Metro has no department chairs.*** Department chairs are positions of power, pointed out one teacher. And frequently they serve to stifle innovation. Metro has never had department chairs and does not miss them. Decisions are made by all faculty in a specific subject area through discussion and problem-solving. "If we want to team-teach a class, we just do it," said one math teacher. Team teaching is encouraged at Metro as a way to facilitate interdisciplinary study. Sometimes specific team teaching arrangements can't be accommodated because of the need for "pure" courses (e.g., Algebra) to appear on students' transcripts, however.

## Implementation Issues

*Opposition from students*. Faculty claim that the main opposition to the alternative program comes from students, many of whom assume they are at fault when they have difficulties in school and cling to traditional schooling practices. "The more innovative we are [in terms of instruction], the more they balk," said one administrator. "It is a constant challenge to convince them that they are learning. Interdisciplinary courses take a real selling job from the faculty; the students want to take classes with the traditional names that they associate with high school."

*Annual recruitment and rolling enrollment*. As a school established to meet the needs of the city's high school dropouts, Metro enrolls students throughout the school year. When the school year begins, Metro may have only 250 students. A few months into the school year the enrollment swells as a result of the faculty's recruitment efforts. About 350 additional students enroll throughout the school year at weekly intervals. This arrangement requires Metro faculty to be flexible in their instructional planning and assessment procedures because each student has a distinct developmental path--academic and social--and "seat time" is valued less than demonstrable competence.

***Student assessment***. Metro's student population is fluid, rendering standardized tests inappropriate tools for measuring student achievement--according to faculty--because (1) students' year-to-year attendance patterns do not allow for the linear progression of skill development assumed by most standardized tests, (2) the content of standardized tests are incongruent with Metro's curriculum, and (3) most Metro students have had negative experiences with standardized tests and are reluctant (if not staunchly opposed) to applying themselves to taking tests. Consequently, Metro uses a portfolio assessment process. Students begin building their portfolios during the new student orientation when they write their autobiographies. They continue to add to their portfolios (with work from all classes) during their entire tenure at Metro. Portfolio pieces are selected by both students and teachers. Students also complete mini-exhibitions and performances in many classes.

Student assessment continues to be an area of intense study among Metro faculty. In 1993, the curriculum and assessment committee was in the process of designing demonstrations for each subject area, vocademics, and elective course. The demonstrations will be based on definitions--already developed--of the skills and attributes needed by a high school graduate and the skills to be taught in each area. By way of assistance, each subject-area team was investigating potential performance assessments for their specific content area. The math/science team freely admitted that they had a long way to go. They did not however seem frustrated; they simply acknowledged the complexity of the task.

## Impacts and Outcomes

***Dropout rate***. Metro High School original function was to accommodate the learning needs of students whose life situation (e.g., need to work full time, pregnant or parenting) and/or learning style (e.g., won't get up in time for early morning classes) do not fit the traditional high school structure. Thus, the fact that dropouts choose to return to school and complete their high school education at Metro is a measure of success in itself.

Although the school district publishes dropout rates for individual high schools and the total district, Metro's principal does not place much stock in them because they represent the number of students who left school in a given year and, to the district's knowledge, did not enroll elsewhere. Such figures obscure the developmental pattern of the students who attend Metro High School, says the principal. (In order to do that, it's necessary to track individual students to see what they are actually doing when they leave school.) For some students, especially those who attend Metro, missing a semester of high school is actually a temporary interruption in progress toward graduation (due to, for example, trouble with substance abuse, the need for full-time work, etc.), but does not mean permanent dropout status. Metro's principal has begun to track individual students each year (Table 1). She considers the students counted under "no positive outcome" as the true dropouts.

***Graduation rate***. Metro High School calculates graduation rates differently than other schools because Metro students, on average, take five years to graduate from high school compared with the traditional four years.[1] Of the Metro students who began the 1990-91 school year with sufficient credits to be called seniors, 82 percent had graduated by the summer of 1993. Seventy percent of the 1991-92 seniors had graduated by the summer of 1993. Of the 1992-93 seniors, 35 percent had graduated by the summer of 1993, and 45 percent were still active students.

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[1] Students who attend traditional high schools in this state accrue between 22 and 26 credits per term in order to graduate within the standard four years. Metro students earn, on average, 15 to 16 credits per term, falling roughly one term per year behind their traditional-school peers.

## Table 1
## Spring Status of Students who Attended Metro High School, by School Year
(N = about 600)

| | Percent of Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student status | 1990-91 | 1991-92 | 1992-93 |
| Plans to re-enroll at Metro in the fall | 50% | 58% | 60% |
| Graduated from Metro | 12 | 13 | 10 |
| Inactive student, but not dropout | 8 | 11 | 9 |
| Transferred out of the school district | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| Transferred to Metro's GED program | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Transferred within the school district | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| In residential treatment, jail, or prison | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Enlisted in armed services | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Employed and not returning to school | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| No positive outcome | 5 | 6 | 5 |

Note: Numbers do not sum to 100 percent due to rounding error.

Source: School records maintained by principal

***Postgraduate status***. Metro has been unsuccessful in tracking the activities of substantial numbers of Metro graduates for very long after they leave the school. However, the principal conducted a follow-up study of 1991 graduates to find out what they were doing in September of 1992 (Table 2). She found that 37 percent were employed full-time and 8 percent part-time. Thirty-two percent were continuing their education in a two-year or four-year institution of higher education or in a vocational training program, and 4 percent were enlisted in the armed services.

## Table 2
## Postgraduate Status of 1991 Metro High School Graduates

| Postgraduate activity (fall 1992) | Percent of students<br>(N=51) |
|---|---|
| Employed full time | 37% |
| Enrolled in a community college | 18 |
| Enrolled in vocational training | 12 |
| Employed part time | 8 |
| Enlisted in the armed services | 4 |
| Enrolled in a four-year college/university | 2 |
| Other | 16 |
| Unknown | 4 |

Notes: Total percent exceeds 100 due to rounding error.
Does not include the 30 Metro students who earned a GED diploma in 1991.

Sources: Application for the 1992-93 Secondary School Recognition Program; school records

*Academic achievement*. The faculty's indifference to standardized tests notwithstanding, Metro requires all students in every grade (including special education students) to take two assessments every year: the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) (administered in the city's traditional high school at grade 10 only) and a writing assessment (administered by the district at grade 11 only). DRP scores are useful to teachers because they are reported in terms of reading ability in relation to common reading materials.[2] DRP scores are not conducive to aggregation, but Metro faculty assert that "DRP scores suggest our students struggle with reading proficiency in the same way they struggle with writing skills."

Writing assessment scores for Metro eleventh graders appear in Table 3. The scores are assigned to students' writing samples by teachers trained in a holistic scoring method. Although the majority of students scored below average for all three years, a positive trend is evident. The proportion of students scoring below average drops from 82 percent in 1989-90 to 60 percent in 1991-92. The proportion of students scoring above average climbs from 8 to 13 percent during that same period, and the proportion of students scoring average more than doubles from 10 percent in 1989-90 to 27 percent in 1991-92. Despite these improvements, Metro scores lag behind those of eleventh graders districtwide: in 1991-92, 13 percent of Metro students scored above average, compared with 40 percent of students districtwide.

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[2] For example, a newspaper may be written, on average, at level 52 DRPs. If a student scores at 75 DRPs, then she should be able to read with success most newspaper articles.

### Table 3
### District Writing Assessment Scores for Eleventh Grade Metro Students, 1989-90 to 1991-92 and District Eleventh Graders, 1991-92

| | Percent of Students | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Score - Indicator | Metro 1989-90 | Metro 1990-91 | Metro 1991-92 | District 1991-92 |
| 8 - Superior | 0% | 0% | 0% | 8% |
| 7 - Commendable | 3 | 0 | 5 | 12 |
| 6 - High Average | 5 | 10 | 8 | 20 |
| 5 - Average | 10 | 21 | 27 | 23 |
| 4 - Low Average | 36 | 28 | 16 | 21 |
| 3 - Weak | 18 | 10 | 22 | 10 |
| 2 - Very Weak | 28 | 31 | 22 | 6 |
| 1 - Incomplete | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Application for the 1992-93 Secondary School Recognition Program; school records; district records

## Resources

Metro operates on the same per pupil allocation as other district schools: $4,794 in 1992-93. Because students attend only a half day, the school serves twice the number of students that another school would serve with the same number of faculty members, thus paying for the smaller class size.

Metro High School also receives roughly $20,000 a year through the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act's competitive grant process; the grant funds salaries for teacher assistants who run the school's childcare facility. In addition, faculty members who use the facility pay a user fee which generates almost $2,000 a month, money that helps offset the cost of the rather expensive center.

# MOTON AND LOCKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

## Overview and Context

Moton and Lockett Elementary Schools, two inner-city schools in New Orleans, undertook a three-year experiment in year-round education from 1989 to 1992. During this period, students attended school for 220 days each year instead of the district's 180-day calendar. The idea for extending the academic year was introduced by a member of the parish school board who believed that low-income, disadvantaged students could reap significant academic benefits from spending more time engaged in school-related activities. With the support of the Executive Director of the National Association for Year-Round Education, he successfully urged the school board to form a planning committee to explore the feasibility of his idea and develop a plan for implementation.

The planning committee decided to observe and study the implementation and effects of the innovation within a small area of the city. Surveys were conducted and public hearings were held in order to determine the most suitable sites. The strongest support for the plan came from Moton and Lockett schools, which both serve an extremely impoverished and isolated area of the inner city. Many of their students live in public housing projects, communities that are plagued by crime and drug trafficking. Area residents favored extending the school year because they believed that the schools provided safer and cooler (they are both air-conditioned) alternatives to the housing projects--particularly during the hot summer months.

The extended-year experiment at Moton and Lockett schools began with high expectations for enhanced student achievement. The fact that achievement did not increase, combined with the serious financial problems in the district, led the school board to abandon the experiment in 1992.

Beginning in 1992-93, the extended-year program was replaced in both schools with a year-round, 180-day school calendar. Under the new year-round schedule, students receive 45 days of instruction followed by 15 days of vacation. An intersession program, funded by Chapter 1, is available to the lowest achieving students.

In 1992-93 Moton enrolled 600 students and Lockett enrolled nearly 900. Almost all of the children were African American and qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. About 90 percent of the students were from families that receive AFDC payments. More than 75 percent of students in both schools qualified for

Chapter 1 services and both instituted schoolwide projects so that all students in the school could benefit from Chapter 1 funds. Moton and Lockett had a staff of approximately 30 and 38 teachers respectively. Moton, which was built on top of an abandoned city garbage dump, was opened in 1986. Lockett was constructed in 1933 and last renovated in 1986.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

The extended-year program increased the school year by 40 days. Teachers at both schools reported that this gave them time to "take ideas a little further" and be "a little more relaxed" in their teaching. Under the revised schedule, teachers spent more time on specific skills within each subject area while students got more time to practice skills and master the subject matter being taught. Some teachers noted that they tried to use fewer worksheets and involve students in more creative learning activities that were not necessarily teacher-directed. The assistant principal at Lockett added that teachers at her school spent more time on "targeted instruction in language arts." According to teachers, the extended school year gave the schools an opportunity to include field trips for students to "expose them to cultural things in the outside world" during the school year.

Despite these reports, one district administrator observed that the absence of organized and sustained staff development for teachers at both schools was the main weakness of the extended-year experiment. Several teachers and school administrators also agreed that, although there were some efforts to provide staff development in the second and third years of the experiment, training events were somewhat sporadic and inadequate to effectively address the increased need for faculty training. In the absence of organized and sustained staff development, most teachers turned to the same curriculum and instructional strategies used under the old schedule. The district administrator maintained that the summer of 1989 should have been used for planning and staff development rather than for starting classes. Another central office administrator put it this way: "Teachers ran out of curriculum."

The return to a 180-day calendar has coincided with an increased emphasis on preparation for the California Achievement Test at both schools. In fact, several classes that we visited featured intense review of practice copies of this test. Teachers noted that the increased attention to preparing for the test was also evident in the intersession classes. During the early phases of the implementation of the longer school year, these additional days had often been used for activities that teachers characterized as enhancing students' social skills and development. Educational field trips for students have been greatly reduced.

Reflecting on the three-year experiment, many teachers and administrators emphasized the children's safety as the most important element in the extended-year program. However, others felt that safety was not enough. In their view, the program's real value should be assessed in terms of gains in academic skills because such results ensure students' future success.

## Design Issues

The extended-year program was shaped by the basic assumption that students at Moton and Lockett needed more time on basic academic tasks in order to learn. As a result, the content of the curriculum was not revised. Instead, specific skills were identified for each subject and grade-level. Teachers then spread the teaching of these skills over the longer time period, giving students the chance to spend a longer time on task while affording themselves the opportunity to provide detailed instruction at a more relaxed pace.

As the extended-year program began, the school board and administrators expressed concerns about attendance and the likelihood that absenteeism might increase with the longer year. Indeed, according to the school social worker, only close monitoring (e.g., phone calls, home visits) prevented some students from missing up to 100 days per year. Reports from both schools indicated that this increased attention resulted in attendance rates remaining above 87 percent for the entire experimental period.

## Implementation Issues

***Insufficient time for planning.*** Two weeks after the academic year ended in June 1989, the initiative to extend the school year was approved and teachers were called back to school. There was, therefore, virtually no building-level planning time before implementation. Teachers had to scramble to make summer arrangements for their own children, cancel vacation plans, participate in a two-week staff development program, and welcome children back to school within a very short space of time. One teacher said, "It was like you were going into a dark room and you didn't even know what was there." Because of the haste with which the program began, the schools undertook relatively little in the way of quality of time reforms (e.g., curriculum and instruction improvements) within the context of their quantity of time increase.

Some teachers reported that they felt that the change was "thrust upon us." At Lockett, teachers averaged 21 years of experience at the school, and they enjoyed being in familiar surroundings with peers whom they had known for years. Thus, they were hesitant to transfer to a different school even if they had some qualms about the longer school year. Although no one objected to the increased income, most teachers insisted that it was not the money that motivated them. They argued that their students needed more school time and that the additional days of work were part of their commitment to the students.

***Logistical snafus.*** The school principals quickly discovered that the purchasing office and the central warehouse were not designed to distribute supplies during the summer. One principal recalled a conversation with the purchasing office this way: "The communication was not too good. They would ask, 'Why are you open?,'" Similar problems with the payroll and the substitute pool resulted from the extended-year schools' schedule being out of sync with the central office's.

Coordination and communications between the extended-year schools and the central office, including purchasing and payroll, were resolved after the first year. A change in policy relieved the central office of responsibility for substitute teachers and required each school to build its own substitute pool.

In addition, custodians at the schools soon found that it was difficult to perform routine maintenance because the buildings were always occupied. Painting and some repairs had to be deferred. Because Moton's building was new and Lockett's building had been recently renovated, deferred maintenance was not too much of a problem. However, the principals indicated that an extended-year program would have been difficult if their buildings had not been in good physical shape. One administrator suggested that a long-term solution to the constant use of the building would probably have required additional funds to pay custodians for overtime and weekend work.

***Confronting conditions of extreme poverty.*** In the opinion of staff at both schools, the many economic, social, and psychological needs of the students and their families served to undermine the potential benefits of any instructional improvements associated with the extended-day initiative. Teachers spoke of second grade students basically taking care of their families, of the fearful child who is unwilling to go home at the end of the day, and of the special education teacher who simply took all of her students home for the weekend as a special treat. One staff member remarked that many students feel a great sense of security just knowing they will receive a warm meal at school in a safe environment. She added that while she understood the need for emphasizing academics, children "can't test [when they are] hungry." The school social worker added that existing social service programs are financially strapped and resources are shrinking. For example, some children need mental health services, but there is a waiting list of six to 12 months. Similarly, students' family members also have to wait long periods of time for drug treatment and other needed services. She told of one parent who was badly in need of drug treatment and who finally agreed to get help, but "it took me five days to get a bed, and it was only in a ten-day Salvation Army program." She suggested that the school district had overlooked the students' overwhelming social needs when they had made plans for extending the school year without providing the funds for her to work with students and their families during the additional school days each summer.

The extended-year program eventually fell victim to districtwide budget cuts. One school administrator argued that the school board cut the program because the central office did not support the extended-year concept. "This was a board member's project and not the central office's," he said. Critics of the program pointed to the lack of improvement in achievement scores. Supporters pointed to the difficulties many students experience in their daily lives, and offered nonacademic justifications for continuing to extend the school year. Nevertheless, the school board was faced with severe budget cuts that were to affect programs throughout the district. Some claim that the board simply made a decision that was politically prudent.

## Impacts and Outcomes

Early promoters of the extended-year experiment asserted that the 220-day school year would directly address the problem of summer loss of learning among children from low-income families. Because there was much skepticism about the experiment in the district, the two schools were under pressure from the start to demonstrate the truth of this assertion. Unfortunately, over the course of the three years, both Moton and Lockett produced disappointing test scores.

Table 1 shows that roughly one-quarter of Moton students scored above average in reading, compared with 50 percent nationwide. There was very little improvement in reading between 1989 and 1992 and a decline in the percentage of Moton students scoring above average in math--25 percent in 1989 compared with 19 percent in 1992.

## Table 1

## California Achievement Test Results in Reading and Mathematics for Moton Elementary School, 1989-92

| | Percent of Students Scoring: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | At or Above the 50th Percentile | | At or Below the 25th Percentile | |
| | Reading | Math | Reading | Math |
| 1989 | 26% | 25% | 44% | 58% |
| 1990 | 21 | 33 | 51 | 46 |
| 1991 | 25 | 24 | 53 | 55 |
| 1992 | 28 | 19 | 45 | 59 |

Table 2 shows improvement in reading scores at Lockett Elementary School: Twenty-four percent of student scored above average in 1992, up from 14 percent in 1989. Despite this gain, Lockett falls well behind national averages, with barely one-quarter of student scoring above the 50th percentile. Math scores at this school follow the same pattern.

## Table 2
## California Achievement Test Results in Reading and Mathematics for Lockett Elementary School, 1989-92

| | Percent of Students Scoring: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | At or Above the 50th Percentile | | At or Below the 25th Percentile | |
| | Reading | Math | Reading | Math |
| 1989 | 14% | 22% | 63% | 50% |
| 1990 | 28 | 30 | 48 | 45 |
| 1991 | 26 | 32 | 49 | 46 |
| 1992 | 24 | 24 | 49 | 52 |

Administrators and teachers at Moton and Lockett believe that their experiment should have been allowed more time to mature. In addition, many believe that test scores did not convey the true impact of the initiative. For example, one teacher commented, "I have a problem with the tests. If people knew the kids' living conditions and how many of them sleep on the floor or in bathtubs to avoid bullets, they would understand the results."

Although they were unable to offer evidence of greater academic achievement among their students, teachers and some school administrators argued that the longer year had positive effects on other indicators such as self-esteem, student and teacher attendance, attitudes toward school, and suspensions or expulsions. For example, in 1988-89, the year before the extended-year experiment began, Moton School had 87 suspensions. During the 1989-90 extended-school year, the number of suspensions fell to 45. At Lockett School, the number of suspensions dropped from 50 to 38, and the number of expulsions declined from 8 to 2. Both schools maintained lowered suspension rates. During the 1990-91 school year, Moton's suspension rate of 2.3 percent (16 students) compared with a district average of 10.9 percent for elementary schools. Although Moton's suspension rate did climb to 5.6 percent (40 students) in 1991-92, it remained well below the district average of 11.7 percent. Lockett School had a similar record. In 1990-91, Lockett's suspension rate was 3.8 percent (25 students), and in 1991-92 the suspension rate was up to 5.1 percent (39 students).

As Table 3 illustrates, attendance at both schools remained high during the extended-year period.

### Table 3
### Average Daily Student Attendance Rates, (1988-89) - (1991-92)

| Year | Moton School | Lockett School | District Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1988-89 | 91.0% | 90.1% | – |
| 1989-90 | 92.3% | 92.2% | – |
| 1990-91 | 91.2% | 91.9% | 88.4% |
| 1991-92 | 87.8% | 90.5% | 88.8% |

Teacher attendance was unaffected by the extended-year program; however, fatigue was a problem for some teachers, and it may have had a negative impact on their instruction.

## Resources

The introduction of the extended-day program placed a financial strain on the school district as additional funds were needed to cover: (1) increased salaries for teachers, administrators, clerical staff, traffic guards, food service personnel, custodians, and other instructional support staff; (2) fringe benefits; (3) utilities; and (4) instructional supplies and other operating expenses.

The 40-day extension represented a 22 percent increase in time over the regular school year. In calculating the additional costs associated with the program, officials assumed that additional operating costs would be 25 percent above routine operational costs. The additional per person costs --salaries and applicable benefits--were estimated as a per diem based on the employee's regular salary (i.e., their current daily rate x 40 days). The total cost of adding 40 days to the school year in the two schools was approximately $750,000.

The schools' eligibility for schoolwide status under Chapter 1 became a critical factor in the decision to try the experiment. District officials reported that although the idea for introducing an extended-year calendar occurred before the decision to become schoolwide Chapter 1 programs, the timing of the two events was of crucial importance. As schoolwide projects, Moton and Lockett had the flexibility to use their Chapter I funds to cover a significant portion of the costs associated with the extended-year calendar. In fact, they doubted that the extended-year experiment would have been implemented if the Louisiana State Department of Education had not authorized the school to use their Chapter 1 funds in this way. The school board ultimately agreed that the extended year-program would be financed in the following manner: Each year the school district would provide $295,000 toward the program while Chapter 1 funds would cover the remaining $455,000.

In 1992, when budget cuts forced the district to discontinue its financial support for the program, the schools returned to a 180-day school calendar. They continue as Chapter 1 schoolwide projects, and still enjoy a certain degree of flexibility in allocating these funds, which support an intersession program for the most academically needy students in the schools.

# NATIVITY MISSION SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

The Nativity Mission School, located in an Hispanic neighborhood New York City is a private Jesuit school for 45-50 economically disadvantaged boys in grades 6-8. In addition to its academic program, the school provides a comprehensive program of support which begins before students enroll, extends beyond the school day, and continues long after students have left the school. The program's intent is to help poor children break the cycle of poverty by offering them the academic and social supports they need at a nominal charge. Nativity Mission runs an afterschool study program for younger students from the public schools, a summer leadership program, extended-day and weekend programs for its own students, and a high school support program for its graduates.

The school draws its tiny enrollment primarily from a large low-income Hispanic community on the city's east side. However, some students take public transportation from other parts of the city to attend the school. Although the city's public school student population is 24 percent Hispanic and a total of 74 percent minority, Nativity Mission is 96 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 1 percent African American. Almost all students (98 percent) are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Seventy percent are from families receiving public assistance. Thirty-one students would be eligible to receive Chapter 1 services if the services were available.

The neighborhood served by the school is poor and most of the students are the first member of their families with an opportunity to complete high school. The students do, however, have support from home. Said one faculty member, "These students are distinguished by having someone who cares; some are defying their families to come here." For the parents, having their child attend private school is a new experience. For example, Nativity Mission's director explained that, for the students who go on to boarding high schools or college, their parents need to be taken to visit the school, "The mothers need to see their room, to make their son's bed, to be sure that they will be all right."

Nativity Mission Center was founded in 1950 to provide special tutoring, counseling, and recreational services to local youth after the regular school day. The program was designed to provide students with positive activities, "a counter to gangs," according to school publications. In 1962, Nativity Mission began to use an upstate camp facility for a summer leadership program. The Nativity Mission School was then established in 1971. According to the director, "Teacher strikes had caused turmoil in the public schools, so we began a school." The center's other activities had been successful so they were retained in the new school.

Nativity Mission School is operated out of the Nativity Mission Center that is located in a five-story tenement building. The fifth floor of the building provides a living space for some of the faculty and also serves as a faculty lounge. The first floor has a small office and one large room that is used for meetings and for playing ping-pong. Behind the building, the school has four half-court basketball courts surrounded by a high fence. A park with an unkempt field and some basketball courts is situated across the street, but the school does not use it because of concerns about drug dealers and general safety.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

***Afterschool program***. Students begin their association with Nativity Mission through a free afterschool program that provides a supervised study environment and recreational activities for 25 to 35 students in grades 4-6. Students come to the program from the local public schools, many of them referred by school principals and teachers. The program begins at 3:00 p.m. when the public schools finish their day. Special academic help is available to those who need it. In addition, students can participate in Nativity Mission's recreational sports program, which includes a spring track program.

The afterschool program for younger children identifies prospective students for admission to the school. Though the afterschool program, students become familiar with the school and interested in enrolling. Those showing an interest in Nativity Mission through active participation in the Brother Lawrence program are also considered for admission to the school.

***Summer camp***. Each year, roughly 20 students from the elementary level afterschool program are selected to join 30 to 35 students from Nativity Mission School at the school's summer program. Many high school graduates of the Nativity Mission School serve as junior counselors at the camp. The camp provides a leadership training program that concentrates on helping students learn to live in a community and develop personal goals. In addition, the camp provides academic and athletic instruction. ESL instruction begins at camp for those students with limited English skills because instruction at Nativity Mission is in English.

For the new students, the camp is the final screening in the admissions process. At the end of the seven-week program, the boys who might best benefit from attending Nativity Mission are selected.

The camp provides an orientation for new teachers as well. The teachers have the opportunity to become familiar with the students. In addition, because most Nativity Mission volunteers have no previous teaching experience, the academic activities at the camp allow them to learn and apply teaching skills.

***Small class size.*** The regular school day program for grades 6-8 is distinguished by its small class size and plentiful extra help. Staffed by nine full-time faculty members and ten other part-time volunteers, the school has class sizes of seven to twelve students and a reported seven-to-twelve student-to-faculty ratio. As a result, the academic program can be tailored to each student's needs. The high number of faculty members makes it possible for faculty to teach only 3.5 hours each day, allowing them to prepare lessons, provide extra help to individual students as needed, and participate in the extended-day activities.

***Traditional organization and instruction.*** The regular day begins at 8:15 a.m. with a brief assembly and a prayer by the school director. Class time is divided into 30-minute periods, with a 15-minute morning break and a half-hour lunch break. Some periods are doubled up to provide longer units of time for subjects such as science or art. Teachers move from class to class while the students stay in one classroom for most of the day. Although students follow a standard curriculum at every grade level, students receive both in-class and pull-out instruction for remediation and advanced work.

The teaching approach is traditional, emphasizing lectures, teacher-directed questioning, frequent quizzes, and drills. However, the instruction is characterized by high expectations and advanced subject matter. Students study topics such as Latin, computers, and algebra during their three years. Because the students are overwhelmingly Hispanic, the school requires them study Spanish as well.

***Extended school day.*** The extended-day activities at Nativity Mission School serve current middle school students, younger children from local public elementary schools, and Nativity Mission graduates who participate in the High School Support Program. A supervised work environment is available for all these students as are special assistance and recreational activities. The main extended-day activities run from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and again from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. From 3:00 to 5:00, students can either work in the study hall or play basketball and ping-pong. Nativity Mission students may be required to attend study hall by a teacher. Students who stay after 7:15 must study until 8:15. After that they may play again until 9:00. At 9:30 a faculty member drives any remaining students home in the school van.

According to the director, roughly 30 Nativity Mission students stay for the afternoon study hall, along with another 25-30 students from other schools. Typically, ten to fifteen Nativity Mission students stay for both study halls on any given day.

On Friday evenings, the school hosts social activities. Basketball and ping-pong are always available. Student volunteers from an art and design college run art activities. Other activities, such as Bingo for Brownies, provide the students with a safe alternative to the dysfunctional aspects of life in their neighborhoods. In addition, the school sponsors activities or field trips almost every other weekend.

***High school placement.*** Helping students gain admission into selective high school programs is a major focus of the Nativity Mission middle school program. School faculty counsel students on their high school options, prepare them for high school placement tests, and assist in completing high school applications and financial aid forms. All students take the city's exam for public school specialty programs. Most students also take the Co-op Exam for Catholic High Schools, and, when appropriate, the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for Independent Schools. The Loyola Scholarship Fund provides assistance for private high-school tuition.

***High School Support Program.*** Once students graduate from Nativity Mission they continue to receive support through the High School Support Program. Although this program does support some non-Nativity Mission graduates, in particular the sisters of graduates, its primary focus is on Nativity Mission graduates. Assistance under this program involves the extended-day program, including access to the schools computers, paid and volunteer positions at Nativity Mission School and the summer camp, Wednesday evening basketball, and help finding summer jobs. In addition, Nativity Mission faculty help these students gain entry to college by providing counseling, college visits, assistance with applications and financial aid, and preparation for the SAT exams. The support is extremely personalized. The director, for example, described using the school van to drive a student and his parents to Virginia when the youth began college.

## Design Issues

***Out-of-school activities and support.*** From the perspective of the school community, the most innovative aspects of Nativity Mission's efforts are those activities that take place outside of the regular school day: the afterschool program for children in grades 4-6, the evening study hall, the summer camp, and the High School Support Program. However, these programs were part of the Nativity Mission Center before it became a school, and they informed the growth of the school. As the director explained, "From the beginning, we saw the value of the out-of-school activities and integrated them back into the school."

***Quality high schools.*** If they can gain admission, Nativity Mission graduates have a number of options for affordable high school education. New York's public school system has a selective system of specialty programs that offer more rigorous academic programs than the regular public schools. Students gain admission to these schools through a citywide exam. In addition, students can attend a number of extremely good Catholic high schools at a relatively low cost. Finally, Nativity Mission students admitted to independent secondary schools usually receive substantial financial aid.

The support at Nativity Mission is designed to take advantage of these resources. By focusing on grades 6-8, the school helps students to stay in school and gain access to a better education. The Loyola Scholarships primarily support students attending Catholic schools. The city's secondary school specialty programs are free, and independent schools provide their own scholarships.

## Implementation Issues

***Staffing.*** About half of Nativity Mission's nine staff are members of the clergy. They tend to be older, more experienced teachers, and, according to the lay faculty, they work longer hours. The lay faculty are all young and single, primarily members of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and they typically work at the school for only two or three years. They receive free room, board, and a $120 weekly stipend. Full-time staff often spend most of their free time at the school.

The staffing arrangement at Nativity Mission helps to integrate students' school-time activities with their afterschool activities. Said the director, "It's important to have the same staff for the full day [for both in-school and afterschool activities], because then the kids see only one staff," an arrangement that provides continuity. The director did not feel that the program would work as well with separate in-school and afterschool staffs. "The overlap is important." He also felt it was important to have some Nativity Mission teachers at the summer camp for the same reason. Staff members also recognized the value of connecting their in-school and afterschool activities. As one teacher commented, "I like to stick around after school. You can work with some of the kids, get to know them better."

One problem with the staffing arrangement is the high turnover of the lay staff. Nonclergy teachers generally stay at Nativity Mission for only two years. "The school is rewarding, but it leaves no time for you to do anything else," said one teacher. "I have gotten out to visit my parents [only] a couple of times." The year-to-year turnover leads to some discontinuity for the students. A few years ago, most of the staff changed, and, according to a teacher, "the kids were angry at first."

Because of this turnover, the staff agree that it is important to have a mix of clergy and lay faculty. The clergy--who stay longer and have more experience--act as master teachers, passing on the history and traditions of the school. The current director also plays a crucial role. He runs the program, oversees almost all of the fundraising, manages the budget, and knows the history of the school. When asked about the success of graduates, he is able to give the history of all of the students in past years, almost entirely from memory.

Despite the turnover, the lay staff valued their time at Nativity Mission. For the staff, the incentive for participating in the program lies in their personal commitment to service. The program has been successful and the interaction with the students is clearly rewarding. Said one teacher, "I came to Nativity Mission because I visited here with a professor and I was impressed by the students; they're happy to be here."

***Parent involvement.*** Nativity Mission has garnered the support of parents and the local community by making them a part of the Center's activities. Parents are encouraged to visit and volunteer at the Center. For example, they prepare lunches for the students, and help with repairs around the building. Fiestas and awards ceremonies encourage families to come celebrate with Nativity Mission students and staff. In addition, the Center assists parents in various ways, including helping them learn English or write letters to the social service agencies.

## Impacts and Outcomes

***Test scores.*** Students who enter Nativity Mission in the sixth grade score, on average, below grade level on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), but by the end of eighth grade, their scores are well above average for their grade. In fifth grade, for example, the classes of 1990 and 1991 posted average grade levels of 3.3 and 4.7 on the CTBS total battery. The class of 1992 averaged grade 4.7 in sixth grade. By eighth grade, all three classes averaged at or above grade level on the total test battery--9.7, 9.2, and 8.7 respectively. In general these three classes, at graduation, averaged at grade level in reading, and well above grade level in other language arts and mathematics.

***High school placement.*** Eleven of Nativity Mission's 1993 graduates went on to private Catholic high schools; one student went to a city specialty high school that offers business education courses. Of Nativity Mission's 1992 graduates, 13 went to private Catholic schools, five went to city specialty high schools, and one went to a private boarding school. Only one student went to a regular public school.

***High school completion and higher education.*** Between 1988 and 1992, 81 percent of Nativity Mission's graduates completed high school, compared with 55 percent of Hispanic students nationwide. Seventy percent of Nativity Mission's graduates went on to college in the same period, compared with only 30 percent of Hispanic students nationwide.

Nativity Mission endeavors to track the careers of its past students. However, because it takes at least nine years before Nativity Mission graduates finish college, the school has not aggregated college graduation rates. Of the 14 students in the Nativity Mission class of 1985, 13 graduated from high school, 10 started college, one is now applying to college, one graduated from a two-year college, four graduated from a four-year college, and two are in longer programs that are not yet completed.

*Affect.* At the classroom level, the extended-day program and out-of-school activities provide an atmosphere of comfort and high expectations. Teachers and students report that large amounts of homework and demanding assignments are the norm because teachers readily assist with and monitor their completion. The students describe the school as feeling like their home. In classes students appear to be both interested and prepared. The daily attendance rate hovers around 95 percent. A teacher described the students as "happy to be here," and another pointed out that "they choose to stay around [after school]." One teacher explained that "the kids come here frightened, but they develop confidence," as shown by better manners, behavior, and carriage.

*Replication.* Nativity Mission has now been replicated in other cities. Nativity Preparatory School, opened Boston's Roxburg community in 1990. In 1991, a similar school for African American boys opened in Harlem. Other schools based on the Nativity Mission model are being introduced in Milwaukee, Baltimore, and elsewhere in New York City. They include some programs for girls.

*Anecdotal evidence.* The school faculty offer anecdotal evidence to illustrate the effects of their program. In 1991-1992, the school admitted five students who were functionally illiterate. By the end of the year they were all reading at a third or fourth grade level. Nativity Mission admits several students each year who have been assigned to resource rooms in the public school. Nativity Mission is able to "mainstream" these students.

For five of the last eight years, Nativity Mission graduates have won the Advanced Placement Spanish writing competition sponsored by a local Catholic high school. The school attributes this achievement to their required Spanish program for Spanish speakers.

## Resources

The Nativity Mission School reports a current expenditure per pupil of roughly $3,000. The entire program was budgeted for only $375,190 in 1992-1993, of which $141,900 went to high school financial aid. The combined expenses of the school, afterschool, and summer programs add up to $148,171, an expenditure of $3,221 for each of the 46 students in the regular program. Combining all the operation, maintenance, and administrative expenses, the expense per pupil is $5,071. However, the expenses for the afterschool and summer programs as well as the operation, maintenance, and administration of the Center include expenses for services to more than the 46 full-time Nativity Mission students.

Overall, Nativity Mission's expenses compare favorably with other schools. For Catholic schools nationally, average tuition (which does not usually cover all current expenditures) was $3,007 in 1990-1991. Unlike most Catholic schools, Nativity Mission has never been supported by a local diocese. In addition, Nativity Mission serves a more disadvantaged population than most of its counterparts. Over the last few years, all Catholic schools have had to become more self-supporting, making the local Catholic schools more concerned about tuition and limiting the availability of financial aid. According to the director, when Nativity Mission first began to offer a school program, "other schools were worried about competition, but it became clear that there was no overlap of our students" because Nativity Mission's students could not hope to pay Catholic school tuition. In 1991, tuition at other non-Catholic, sectarian schools in the nation averaged $4,070. The current expenditure per pupil for public school students in New York City was $7,380 in 1990-1991.

Most of the school's funding comes from charitable gifts, grants, and other fund raising activities. Tuition is only $15 a month, and total tuition and fee revenues account for only about $24,000 of the budget. Although foundations provided at least $139,400 in 1991-1992, a significant amount of the school's funding came from individuals and other groups. In 1991-1992, individuals and groups provided $45,303 in gifts and grants to the school. In addition, most of the $68,400 in the high school scholarship fund comes from small scholarship funds and Catholic groups. The director said, "Jesuit schools are able to attract funding because of the large number of alumni [of Jesuit educational institutions]." The summer camp is supported by a single foundation, with some support from federal public assistance.

The school's association with the Catholic church provides skilled and committed faculty at a very low cost. Lay faculty who are members of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps work for $120 a week plus room and board. The clergy provides more experienced teachers as well as a sense of continuity. The director of Nativity Mission receives only $400 a month plus room and board. Nativity Mission also makes extensive use of volunteers. These volunteers act as teachers, tutors, activity leaders, and support staff. They include high school, college, and graduate students as well as parents.

# NATIVITY PREPARATORY SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

Nativity Preparatory School is a private Jesuit school for economically disadvantaged boys in the middle grades. Located in Boston, it is a replication of the Nativity Mission School in New York City, which is also profiled in this series of case studies. Nativity Preparatory School (commonly known as Nativity Prep) opened in September 1990 with 29 boys in grades 5 and 6 and, within two years, had grown to its full complement of 60 students in grades 5-8.

Like its model, Nativity Prep's goals are to help students develop strong academic skills and self-discipline; gain acceptance to selective, college-preparatory schools; and break the cycle of poverty. To accomplish these goals, Nativity Prep extends the school day with required afterschool and evening study programs. The program provides students with rigorous academic instruction and comprehensive, personalized support. In addition, the school provides free social support through optional activities on Friday and Saturday and a summer camp program.

The school draws its enrollment from inner-city neighborhoods in the large northeastern city where it is located. More than 75 percent of the students are African American or Hispanic, many come from single-parent families, and almost all are from low-income families. Only a few students have parents who have completed high school.

Nativity Prep is located in a four-story building that is on loan from the city's Archdiocese. The first floor has a large room that is used for morning assembly, lunch, and recreational activities. The library, the faculty lounge, and several offices occupy the second floor. There are four classrooms on the third floor, one for each grade. On the fourth floor, there are four more classrooms, which house the computer, laboratory science, art, and music programs. The building is situated in a tough, predominantly poor neighborhood. There are public housing projects nearby along with a small, private complex of well-tended lower-income apartments.

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, the 14 faculty members attend faculty meetings once a week and help out with the following: campus cleanup, afternoon activities, evening study, and Saturday field trips. Faculty also serve as mentors and counselors to the students.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

Nativity Prep's program is intended to provide safe and supportive environment in which promising but economically disadvantaged boys can develop the academic and social skills necessary to succeed academically and in life. The school selects students who can succeed in its rigorous program and provides them with academic and social activities that fill most of their time. In addition, the school provides the academic support and counseling that the students need to realize their potential.

***Recruitment and selection.*** Nativity Preparatory School is a selective school that focuses on identifying disadvantaged boys who will benefit from its resources. Its program is not suited for every young male from a troubled, inner-city neighborhood. It is a good environment for boys who are motivated to work hard academically, and who have self-control. The principal commented, "It's whether they value education and whether they're willing to make the effort to learn."

Selection for Nativity Prep demands that students demonstrate financial need, personal and family commitment, and sufficient academic ability to succeed. The current selection process involves a written application, an exam, and a 30-minute interview. The application asks questions about current school, religious background, ethnic background, and income level. Applicants are asked to write a paragraph explaining why they want to attend Nativity Prep, and parents or guardians are asked to write a paragraph explaining why they support the application. In addition, the school tries to ensure that there are never less than two boys from any given race/ethnic background in any class.

***Small class size.*** The regular-day academic program is distinguished by its small class size and individualized attention. The classes range in size from 14 to 19 students and the student/faculty ratio is five-to-one. Teachers get to know their students well and spend less time on discipline than they might at other schools. One teacher commented, "There are less kids here than in public schools. I am able to be aware of everyone in class. I'm not a disciplinarian; I'm teaching."

***Traditional organization and instruction.*** The regular day begins at 8:15 a.m. with a brief assembly and a prayer led by the principal. Class time is divided into eight 40-minute periods, with a 15-minute morning break and a half-hour lunch break. Teachers move from class to class and students stay in one room for most of the day. Although students follow a standard curriculum at each grade level, students receive both in-class and pull-out instruction for remediation and advanced work.

Although the teachers express an interest in innovative instructional methods, such as cooperative learning, classes are generally teacher-directed. Teachers use a combination of lecturing, questioning, and drill. Although students at Nativity Prep have few academic choices, the instruction is characterized by high expectations. Students were uniformly prepared for and attentive in class. All students take English, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, religion, art, and computers. In addition, fifth graders take classes in vocabulary, math drill, and study skills; sixth and seventh graders take Latin, math drill, and technology; and eighth graders study technology.

***Afterschool program.*** The afterschool program runs from 3:10 p.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and attendance is mandatory. The program includes sports, music and art, study sessions, and campus cleanup. Afterschool study sessions give every student an opportunity to complete their work in a supervised environment with access to help. Study sessions enable students needing help with any academic subject to work with teachers, individually or in small groups.

With the exception of the soccer and basketball teams, students participate in all of the afterschool activities. Athletic activities feature appropriate seasonal sports. Nativity Prep's soccer team is in its second year of competition and its basketball team has been playing for three years. Both teams play against other private schools. Baseball and lacrosse are the spring sports. The music program consists of the Nativity Prep Boys Choir. The art program is under the direction of school staff. To help with maintenance of the school, students clean their classrooms two or three times a week and do other cleaning when necessary.

***Evening study.*** Each evening, roughly three-quarters of the students return to Nativity Prep for supervised study from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Supervised by teachers and adult volunteers, evening study provides a safe, quiet environment and extra help for students who need it. Some students are required to come because of their poor grades, but many students come because they have difficulty studying at home. As one commented, "The TV is on the whole time; I can't get any work done." In addition, students are encouraged to come to Friday evening social activities. They must come to evening study three times in a week in order to participate on Friday.

Although most Nativity Prep students live close enough to the school to go home and return in the evening, some students live farther away. Some students go home, spend time with relatives, or visit classmates before returning to the school for evening study. Others go home once the afternoon program ends and do not return until the following morning. There are a few students who arrange to remain at the school between 5:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

***Social activities.*** Nativity Prep offers an array of optional social activities on Friday evenings, Saturdays, and in the summer. These activities are a positive alternative to the hazards of life in poor, inner-city neighborhoods; they build a sense of community and commitment at the school and support the academic program. On Friday evenings, students can attend social events such as paper airplane contests, ping-pong, or board games, provided they have attended at least three evening study halls and not missed more than one assignment that week. Saturday activities--which give the faculty, students, and their families a chance to interact socially--have included an all-school Olympics; a family cook-out; and numerous field trips including a day at Mystic Seaport with the boys from Nativity Mission School. Nativity Prep also has an arrangement that allows its current students free participation at a leadership camp, which most Nativity Prep students attend each summer.

***High school placement and support.*** A major focus of the Nativity Prep middle school program is helping students gain admission and succeed in selective high schools. Nativity Prep has had only one graduating class, but their success rate is high. School faculty counsel students on their high school options, prepare them for high school placement tests, and assist in completing high school applications and financial aid forms. The entire eighth grade takes the Secondary School Aptitude Test (SSAT), the placement exam for independent schools, and the SSAT preparation course is a required part of the eighth-grade curriculum. Nativity Prep has also tried to support its students in high school by keeping in touch through follow-up letters and by inviting them to study at the school.

## Design Issues

Like its prototype, Nativity Mission, the program at Nativity Prep is designed to address problems faced by urban, middle school students from low-income families. The school's program is characterized by long operating hours, personalized attention, lengthy homework assignments, high expectations for student behavior, afternoon detention, and a strict dress code. These features provide students with a great deal of structure.

Because Nativity Prep replicates an already successful program, its design does not have the historical roots that shaped many aspects of its prototype. Nativity Mission began as a community center. In fact, many of its afterschool activities predate the school itself. Because Nativity Prep borrowed its class structure and afterschool design, it does not demonstrate as strong a connection to the community. While at Nativity Mission sisters, parents, graduates, and students from other schools fill the center after school, at Nativity Prep only its regular students participate in the afterschool, evening, and weekend activities.

Nativity Prep's long operating hours and five-to-one student/faculty ratio give students a sense of belonging. The school is open on weekdays for at least 11 hours between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Students know that they will be physically safe while they are there and that adults are available to work one-to-one with them. One student said that the best thing about the school was "being safe." Another mentioned, "There aren't a lot of students here so we get a lot of attention."

Teachers assign large amounts of homework and expect it to be completed. The official homework load is two hours. One teacher noted, however, that "most of the time, it's really more than two hours." In-class time is usually productive because students almost always complete their assignments and rarely cause disciplinary problems. Strict enforcement of the school's code of conduct prohibits them from disrupting school, classroom, or school-sponsored activities and from being disrespectful of school staff, volunteers, or other students. The principal stated, "We talk a lot about respect. They are very polite and they respect each other because we drum it into them."

When a student does not complete a homework assignment or has violated the school's rules of conduct, he can be sent to afternoon detention, which is referred to as JUG (Justice Under God). JUG is a common institution in Jesuit schools. The term refers to the concept that discipline should be just and is intended to safeguard common rights and freedoms. JUG encourages the individual to act as a sensible, mature, and responsible member of the community.

Nativity Prep's dress code requires each student to wear a dress shirt, dark dress slacks, dress shoes or dark sneakers, and a tie. In the words of one teacher, "The school has an effective technique for building a sense of respect in each student. The dress code indicates that Nativity Prep is a special place. It also removes a sense of competitiveness based on income."

## Implementation Issues

***Student attrition.*** Now, in its fourth year of operation, Nativity Prep has a fully developed selection process and a relatively stable student body. However, in its first two years, the school struggled to find an appropriate student body. Of the 29 original boys, 18 were asked to leave the school primarily for discipline problems. The director explained that, by the 1992-1993 year, "discipline improved because we had a better [student] profile."

***Staffing.*** Of the 14 faculty members at Nativity Prep, roughly two-thirds are full-time staff who work every day from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., attend faculty meetings once a week, and help out with evening study and Saturday field trips. Although teachers teach only four periods a day, many of them tutor students during other periods.

The school has little difficulty recruiting college graduates to teach at the school on a short-term basis, although the principal complained that it is difficult to attract minority staff. During its short existence, Nativity Prep has developed a strong reputation and attracts bright, energetic young adults who are interested in working with inner-city students. The faculty members are all supportive of one another. One teacher remarked, "If we didn't have each other as resources, we wouldn't be able to do this."

One problem associated with the staffing arrangement is the high turnover of the lay staff. Nonclergy teachers generally stay at Nativity Prep for only two years. One stated that the "biggest problem is that a lot of people can't afford to stay for longer than one or two years." Teachers receive only $200 a month, room and board, and health insurance. Three members of the faculty are Jesuits and a third lives with the Jesuits. Four young teachers live in a convent in a nearby community. Three faculty members are married and live in the suburbs. All of these have other means of support.

In order to compensate for the high turnover and inexperienced teachers, two faculty members are working to codify the curriculum. All of the teachers have been asked to submit daily lesson plans, syllabi, and copies of materials in order to document what is being taught. The faculty hope to synthesize this information into curriculum suggestions for new teachers.

***Students' families.*** Several of the students reported that they do not spend much time with their families because they are always at school. A seventh grader remarked, "My mother supported me at first, but now she's not sure because she never sees me." Another stated, "My family thinks I'm crazy to be here at seven o'clock in the morning."

The families of the students do not have a lot of contact with Nativity Prep's faculty. Most parents and guardians rarely come to the school. In an attempt to change this, the school does not send progress reports and report cards through the mail. Instead, parents are required to come into the school to pick them up. According to the principal, this strategy is working. He commented, "This is one way we get the parents to come into the school."

## Impacts and Outcomes

Although the principal reports that the eighth grade boys' performance on the SSAT is only fair, Nativity Prep has had good success placing students in selective secondary schools. The first class of eighth graders graduated from the school in June 1993. Of those 11 students, ten are now attending private secondary schools, including Boston College High School, Cathedral High School, Proctor Academy, Rivers, Roxbury Latin, and St. Sebastian's.

Because the school is just getting started, they have not had the time or the resources to administer standardized tests. The school administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for the first time in 1993-94. The fifth graders took the test in the fall, the sixth graders took it in February, and the seventh graders took it in April.

The students learn to value education while they are at Nativity Prep and avoid the problems that strike many youths in their neighborhoods. A seventh grader commented, "The education component is really strong here. I want to go to college and get a good job." An eighth grader added, "I wasn't disciplined when I came here. I've learned to be more disciplined." The school provides an opportunity for the students to avoid some of the problems that affect other adolescents in their communities. One seventh grader remarked, "A lot of kids end up on the streets and they get into trouble. But that doesn't happen to us."

## Resources

Attendance at Nativity Prep is nearly free of charge. There is a $100 activity fee for which parents are responsible. The operating budget for 1993-94 was between $180,000 and $200,000. Nativity Prep reports current expenditure per pupil of roughly $2,500, including the cost of the regular school day, the afternoon program, the evening study program, and the Saturday field trips.

The school does not have a permanent endowment. The director of development commented, "There's no safety net right now and that concerns me." The building occupied by Nativity Prep is on loan from the city's Archdiocese. The principal mentioned, "The parish gave us the building rent-free for five years. This is our fourth year."

Most of the school's revenues come from local contributors: individuals, corporations, and private foundations. For example, a check for $18,500 was presented to the executive director in September 1991 on behalf of the Jesuit Order. The money was used to purchase a new school van that transports students to athletic activities and on field trips.

In 1991-92, Nativity Prep received more than $250,000 in donations to support its school operations and a number of capital purchases and building improvements. Local donors include the Charles Hayden Foundation, which committed $40,000 to the school for library furniture and building renovations, and the Edwin S. Webster Foundation, which contributed $10,000 for the restoration of the library.

A number of major corporations with large local operations made in-kind donations to the school in 1991-92, including Apple Computer Inc., which contributed Macintosh computers; The Colonial Group, Inc., which donated IBM XT computers; Microsoft, Inc., which contributed word-processing software; and the John Hancock Company, which donated library furniture. In addition, admission to the summer camp is free of charge for the school as well as the students.

# PINEY WOODS SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

Founded in 1909, the Piney Woods School was established to provide poor black students with a "head, heart, and hands" education. The original goals of the school were to adequately prepare its students to earn a living at a useful trade and to "learn to take their places as competent citizens in tomorrow's world."

Piney Woods is located in Piney Woods, Mississippi, 21 miles south of Jackson. An ex-slave donated the 40 acres of land on which the school was first built. Today, the campus extends over a 2,000-acre area that includes animal and agricultural farms, lakes, and extensive woodlands, enabling the school to develop a degree of self sufficiency: all the beef, pork, chicken, and lamb consumed on campus is reared on the school's property, with the help of students.

There are 284 students enrolled in the grades 7-12. They come from approximately 30 states (including Alaska), Haiti, the Virgin Islands, Kenya, Angola, and Ethiopia. All of the school's students are black, and 20 percent are children of alumni. Forty-two percent are from in-state; the largest number of out-of-state students come from Illinois, New York, Maryland, California, Georgia, and Michigan. Although 46 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 18 percent come from families that receive AFDC payments, Piney Woods's president reports that as many as 70 percent come from "low-income" households. Nearly three-quarters of all students are from single-parent families.

Today, Piney Woods's residential, college preparatory program seeks to provide grades 7-12 students with "a focused academic climate, consistent discipline, and strong ethical and spiritual values." Over the past nine years, the school's president has implemented several instructional innovations, many of which are based on the "Effective Schools" philosophy that he embraces. The 33-member faculty seek to inspire students to succeed academically and to create an environment in which students receive the social and educational supports they need to excel.

Parents choose to enroll their children in Piney Woods for many reasons. Some students are sent by parents who fear for their safety in urban public schools and crime-filled neighborhoods; others are sent by parents who want to put their child in an environment where they can be more carefully supervised on a daily basis, develop discipline, and experience fewer distractions. Some students also described feeling "lost" within a large public school system with teachers who did not appear to care about them personally or academically. They explained that Piney Woods's small size and intimate atmosphere was an attractive alternative because teachers here regularly monitor grades and academic performance, and they are not "allowed" to fail.

## The Nature of the Innovation

Since its inception, Piney Woods has been a boarding school. However, the school's president believes that it is not the residential component per se that is responsible for current student progress and achievement. Instead, he identified "the structure and discipline we have in place" as a major contributor to the school's success. He added that its status as a private school allows teachers to address moral and ethical topics and has also contributed to the positive tone and atmosphere of the school. Everyone with whom we spoke emphasized that structure, discipline, and high expectations for all students were the key factors that have contributed to the school's success. Although no one credited the curricular and instructional program per se for students' achievement, several significant changes in the academic program have been introduced within the past nine years.

### Key Characteristics

***Curriculum and instruction***. Piney Woods requires all students to complete a minimum of 22 units for graduation, compared with 20 units required by the state. The required courses are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| English | 4 units |
| Mathematics | 4 units (Algebra 1, Algebra 2, geometry) |
| Sciences | 4 units (choose from biology, advanced biology, chemistry, physics, and advanced physics. One of these must include laboratory work. |
| Economics | 1/2 unit |
| Social Sciences | 2 1/2 units (must include American history, state civics, and American government) |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Other Requirements | 2 units of physical education (if student enters Piney Woods in the ninth grade)<br>1 unit of foreign language<br>1/2 unit of computer applications |

In addition to these required courses, Piney Woods offers an array of elective courses that are open to students in grades 9-12, including consumer math, calculus, critical reading/study skills, developmental English/written communication, drama, creative writing, speech, minority studies, psychology, sociology, music (vocal, piano, band), typing, accounting, art, and technology education. In addition to fulfilling course requirements, prospective graduates must: (1) research, write, and deliver a successful speech to the entire student body and (2) pass the state Functional Literacy Examination. This exam may be taken at any time during their high school career.

Piney Woods has a "competency-based instructional program" that requires students to master each course at the 75 percent level or higher. Students earning less than 75 percent in two or more subjects during a nine-week marking period earn an "I" (incomplete) and must participate in the "Star Shooters" program that meets on Saturdays. During these sessions supervised by a teacher, students complete additional assignments or are retaught the concepts with which they have experienced difficulty. They are retested at an appropriate time, and the newly earned grade replaces the "I" for that nine-week period. If students fail to improve their grade after participation in "Star Shooters," the original "D" or "F" is recorded as the final grade.

Other efforts to assist students in achieving their potential include the Always Reaching Up (ARU) program. ARU is a developmental program that caters to two groups of students: (1) low achieving students who exhibit basic skills deficiencies, and (2) high achieving students who can be classified as intellectually or academically "exceptional," based on their grades and test scores. Faculty and staff assert that both of these groups of students need additional activities and experiences--beyond what is available in the traditional classroom--that will motivate and challenge them, and thus serve to enhance their academic development. Students are referred into the program by a teacher who must produce documentation to justify the request. Those accepted receive extra individual and small-group instructional assistance, coordinated instructional plans, and additional assignments. They also participate in special field trips, seminars, and workshops designed to challenge, motivate, and reinforce classroom learning.

In 1991, Piney Woods formed a partnership with the Bread Loaf School of English (based at Middlebury College in Vermont) to implement a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum program. The goals of this linkage are to: (1) improve students' writing and reading proficiency; (2) develop a fully equipped computer laboratory and desktop publishing center; and (3) establish Piney Woods as a regionally and nationally known center for writing and learning. After two years, efforts to achieve these goals have resulted in increased writing opportunities for students as faculty members are being trained in how to effectively integrate the teaching of writing skills in all subject areas.

In 1986, Piney Woods introduced two-hour block classes as part of a larger effort to create a climate that would be more conducive to academic success. The administration believed that larger blocks of time would allow faculty to develop their lessons and teach more effectively, and that it would allow students to learn new concepts, acquire additional information, and practice new skills over a more extended period of time. The two-hour blocks would also facilitate students' required work schedules. The longer blocks of time have made it easier for students to include employment time into their daily schedules. In addition to longer class periods, single-sex classes were also introduced in an effort to reduce distractions and enhance discipline, particularly in the core subject areas. However, this effort has met with only partial success; scheduling difficulties have made it necessary for some electives and core courses to include both male and female students.

Students receive six hours of instruction each day: three classes are offered on Mondays and Thursdays and the other three classes are offered on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, each of the six courses meet for one hour each. A few teachers expressed concern that some students, particularly the younger ones in the seventh and eighth grades, find it difficult to concentrate for two-hour periods. In addition, other teachers noted that although they appreciated the opportunity to complete a variety of activities and projects during a single class period, they believed that the time between class meetings--two to three days--is too long, and some continuity is lost.

***Student life***. During the week, students rise at 6:00 a.m. and get dressed for breakfast. Between 7:45 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. they attend classes (with a midday lunch break) and do their assigned jobs. All students, regardless of income level, are required to contribute to their education by working 10 hours per week. Students earn $4.25 per hour, and the total amount earned is deducted in full from their tuition bill. Jobs include the cafeteria, farm and grounds, campus dry cleaners, security office, health service, janitorial services, campus stores, library, or an administrative, business, or academic office. Athletes also meet for varsity team practices during the afternoons. Between 5:00 p.m. and bedtime--which is 9:30 p.m. for junior high students and 10:30 p.m. for all others--students eat dinner and must spend a minimum of two hours doing homework and other assignments during the scheduled study period. The remainder of the evening may be spent watching television or participating in school-sponsored events such as the Male and Female Forums, which bring motivational African American speakers to the campus to discuss a variety of educational, social, ethical, and career-related topics with students. Grades 7-9 male students also participate in a weekly Tuesday night workshop entitled: "How to Become Productive Men."

Students participate in several nonacademic activities during the week and on weekends. For example, Piney Woods has a strong athletic program and many students are involved in varsity basketball, soccer, track and field, baseball, and tennis. Other students also participate in these sports on a recreational or noncompetitive basis. Some students are involved in the Boy and Girl Scouts, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), the Science Club, National Honor Society and Junior Honor Society, Future Farmers of America, and the school choir or band.

Dormitory "parents" supervise students during nonschool hours. Typically, these adults live in the dormitories in their own self-contained (i.e., own kitchen, bathroom, living room) apartments; others spend the nights in the dormitories while actually living elsewhere, on or off campus. They are responsible for supervising students during the evenings and at nights, and they also plan and organize various student activities on weekends. Dormitory parents may also be employed as teachers or in other capacities by the school. Teachers, several of whom live on campus, also volunteer to lead tutoring sessions or assist in nonacademic student activities.

Efforts to "continue and strengthen the school's ethical, moral, and citizenship training activities" are considered a top priority of the school administration, and several programs are designed with this in mind. The Rite of Passage program, for example, is a six-month extracurricular program that emphasizes African and African American culture and tradition, and is designed to "provide students with skills and resources that will equip them for responsible adulthood." Each student is guided by two "parents" (volunteer teachers and administrators) who supervise the completion of all scheduled assignments--e.g., reading and writing activities, participation in special seminars and workshops--that are required for them to move through each of the seven stages or "passages". The program culminates in a major campuswide cultural event each spring, and students who have successfully completed all seven stages are honored with special awards and gifts.

Students report that their weekends are typically spent relaxing, watching television, catching up on sleep or school work, or going on supervised excursions to Jackson to see a movie or shop. Special events, such as cultural enrichment trips (e.g., to museums), dances, or talent shows are held periodically. Students are also required to attend all religious services each Sunday: Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship at 11:00 a.m., and Evening Vespers at 5:30 p.m..

## Design Issues

Piney Woods's faculty and staff share a common vision and goal: promote students' academic success and their sense of personal responsibility and discipline. The message that all students can learn--

and that hard work and effort is necessary for success--is communicated directly and indirectly to students on a daily basis. Under the direction of its current president, Piney Woods's faculty and staff have tried to "facilitate an academic climate that impacts upon students' sense of futility. . . ." The encouragement that students receive, coupled with the highly structured academic and social program that emphasizes discipline and personal responsibility, is designed to convey the message that high social and academic standards are expected of all students.

Several aspects of the academic program were introduced with these goals in mind. For example: (1) gender-segregated classes and scheduled library hours--to reduce distractions and improve discipline; (2) longer class periods--to encourage more in-depth coverage of material and provide opportunities for more learning activities to occur; (3) foreign languages and Advanced Placement courses--to expand learning opportunities and challenge students; and (4) the Writing-Across-the-Curriculum program--to increase writing skills among all students.

In addition to the emphasis on academics, there are many rules and regulations related to dress and social and moral behavior to which all students must adhere. The rules require students to dress modestly, demonstrate respect and deference to adult authority, and avoid any behavior that may be construed as being sexually suggestive. Consequences for the most serious violations include in-house suspension; corporal punishment; Saturday work assignments; and expulsion from the program.

## Implementation Issues

A great deal of care goes into the recruitment process. A paragraph taken from the letter that accompanies the student application packet reads as follows:

> We are recruiting the best potential students regardless of socioeconomic background. We are interested in students with appropriate educational and social values who show promise and want a superior academic education that is undergirded by a strong Christian education program. No promising student who is interested in getting a quality education will be turned away because of the inability to pay.

To be admitted to Piney Woods, students must complete a detailed five-page application in which they demonstrate "academic potential" and "a good record of psychological/social values (must not have a record of school expulsion, substance abuse, or arrest)." In addition, students must submit a two-page essay describing the most significant event in their lives, three letters of recommendation, and documents describing their family's financial status. Students are encouraged to enroll in Piney Woods at the eighth or ninth grade levels; however, students are admitted annually at all grade levels served. All students must reside on campus. The majority of entering students are required to have a "C" average; however, grades are not the only criteria for acceptance. For example, students currently failing at another school may be accepted by Piney Woods if their records indicate that they have the potential to do well academically. Nevertheless, several teachers and administrators noted that "Piney Woods is not for everyone." A student who has demonstrated extreme behavioral or academic problems will not be admitted to the school. Similarly, enrolled students unable to adapt to the discipline structure, or who do very poorly in three or more classes, are asked to leave.

The school relies heavily on its teaching and administrative staff who routinely go beyond the technical requirements of their jobs to ensure that students receive the support and services they need during the school day and after regular school hours. Teachers arrive at school before 7:30 a.m. and generally do not leave until 6:00 p.m., although those who volunteer to tutor or work with students on special projects are often there until much later. One teacher remarked: "We have a super staff of dedicated teachers who work long hours . . . an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. person wouldn't last here!" Several teachers live on campus in special faculty housing; however, some commute more than 40 miles each day. Despite the long hours, teachers reported that the small class sizes, student discipline, and administrative support for promoting academic excellence among all students makes Piney Woods a much more pleasant place to work than the typical public school.

Teacher recruitment has been difficult because of the school's rural location and because of lower salaries than those in public high schools in the surrounding areas. The Master Teacher program was introduced in an effort to address this issue and to attract and retain the best teachers. Under the program, certified teachers are able to accrue points--based on their various educational and professional experiences--that allow them to earn increments of $5,000 to $12,000 in addition to their base salary.

In our conversations with some teachers it was apparent that though they were generally pleased with the way the school operates, there are some concerns. One pressing issue is how best to accommodate the unique individuality of every student while still maintaining a structured and disciplined environment for all. Many expressed the belief that students' daily schedules did not permit enough "personal time." This, combined with the school's strict discipline code on dress, social behavior, and academics, is problematic for some students. One teacher stated: "My pet peeve is the social development of the children. There is very little difference between a seventh grader's schedule and a twelfth grader's schedule. We need to find ways to treat older students differently." She emphasized that there is a need for greater attention to the individuality of each student because "a lot of these kids come from difficult environments [and] they have a lot to work through. We need to give them an opportunity to do so." Another added, "If students are always together, that's hard [on them]. They need time to be alone." As an example, a third teacher added that it would be difficult for students to find the time during the tightly scheduled day to practice a personal hobby or maintain their own special area of interest.

## Impacts and Outcomes

A range of attitudes and opinions on life at Piney Woods emerged from the focus groups and from our informal discussions with students. For ease of discussion, students may be described as being in one of two groups: (1) those who strongly believe that the education, discipline, and structure at Piney Woods has "saved" them from their own personal deficiencies (e.g., laziness, lack of motivation), or from negative aspects of their home community (crime, peer-pressure) and has helped them to cultivate a positive attitude toward education and improve their chances for the future; and (2) those who agree that they are receiving a good quality education in a positive environment, but who also feel that the rules and regulations are too restrictive, indicate a lack of trust on the part of the administration, and do not allow them to develop some of the skills (e.g., self-motivation) they will need when they are living on their own in a college environment where "there is no one to tell us what to do and when to do it." For example, a female student, who was apparently well behaved and had done well academically even before coming to Piney Woods, expressed frustration that her maturity and sense of responsibility were not recognized and rewarded with a relaxation of the rules and regulations. On the other hand, her younger brother expressed appreciation for the strict school policies, acknowledging that, left to his own devices, he would "fool around" and not do his work.

Other student complaints included: a lack of personal time; limited opportunities to interact with the opposite sex (e.g., efforts to get coed study periods failed); and frustration over regulations that they feel have no bearing on the learning process (e.g., those related to hairstyles), or are too harsh. ("If students fight, they are too quick to send them home. We're still young. We're going to fight.").

Despite their complaints however, all seemed to recognize the value of being at Piney Woods. They spoke of "being safe," learning to set academic and career goals, and having new experiences ("I work on the farm here . . . [before] I had never had affiliations with animals other than a cat"). Other comments included: "In Chicago you have to be rowdy; I'm not as rowdy here," and "It's like a family here." Teachers also spoke of the close relationships that have developed between and among faculty and students, and the "can do" attitude that many students have developed.

Piney Woods reports that 95 percent of its graduates enter college while the remainder enter the workforce, vocational training, or the military. Many students apply to state and private institutions in the south, but several attend college in the Northeast and New England as well. They are preparing a survey that will allow them to gather information on students after they have entered college. No data are currently available.

Table 1 provides average American College Testing (ACT) Program composite scores for all Piney Woods students who have completed the core curriculum, as well as the average scores of other college-bound students in the state and across the nation, over the past four years. The last column includes data for college-bound African American students nationwide. The data show that, on average, Piney Woods students achieve below the state and national averages; however, their scores are comparable with college-bound African American students across the nation.

### Table 1
### Average ACT Scores for Piney Woods and Other College-Bound Students, 1989-90 to 1992-93

| Year | Piney Woods | State* | National* | African-American Students* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1989-90 | 17.2 | 19.7 | 22.3 | 16.9 |
| 1990-91 | 16.8 | 19.7 | 22.1 | 17.0 |
| 1991-92 | 18.0 | 19.9 | 22.0 | 17.0 |
| 1992-93 | 17.4 | 19.9 | 22.0 | 17.1 |

Source: Schools records
*Source for this column only: American College Testing Program

In the past, Piney Woods students took the California Achievement Test; however, the school stopped using this instrument because they did not find it useful in measuring their students' academic growth.

## Resources

In 1954, Dr. Jones, the school's founder, appeared on the television program "This is Your Life." As a result of that one appearance in which he described the work being done at Piney Woods, a total of $700,000 was donated to the school. The current endowment is $28 million and earnings from this total about $3 million annually. Nevertheless, fundraising is still a major concern. It costs $20,000 per year to educate each Piney Woods student. Tuition and fees were $6,377 for the 1993-94 academic year. Parent contributions cover just 4 or 5 percent of the $7 million annual operating budget. The annual operating budget doubled between 1985 and 1993 because of major capital expenditures (e.g., two new dormitories and a recreational center) and the introduction of some changes in the academic program (e.g., Writing-Across-the-Curriculum, foreign languages, and more advanced courses).

Fundraising is coordinated by the Development Office. Requests for financial assistance go out three times a year to those on the school's mailing list; the widely disseminated quarterly newsletters also encourage gift-giving to the school. In addition, the preparation and submission of proposals to a wide range of business and philanthropic organizations is an ongoing activity. A range of foundations, grant agencies, alumni, and private citizens--many of whom were on the original mailing list from 1954--give generously to the school. Piney Woods' employees also support the school through a special payroll deduction giving plan. The school's revenues and expenses for the past two years appear in Table 2.

### Table 2
### Piney Woods's Revenues and Expenditures, 1992 and 1993

| | Dollar Amount in Millions | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1992 | 1993 |
| Total revenues, including capital additions | $7.4 | $6.8 |
| Total expenditures | $7.1 | $7.6 |

Over the past two years, expenses associated with Piney Woods's program services and auxiliary enterprises (e.g., academic, student aid, food services, dormitory, laundry, medical, agriculture, and store and supplies) totalled, on average, $4.5 million per year. The remaining expenditures were for support services (e.g., business affairs, maintenance, general administrative, and development and fundraising).

# JAMES P. TIMILTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

In 1985, the James P. Timilty Middle School was considered one of the worst schools in Boston; its students were among the poorest performers in the district. Aspiring to turn Timilty and two other middle schools around, the then-superintendent of schools decided that the answer was more time in school for students to study reading and math. Project Promise, as the extended-day program is called, added two periods to the school day for all students and spawned a host of changes in the ways teachers work with students and relate with one another.

Timilty (the only Project Promise school remaining of the original three) is a citywide magnet school serving more than 550 students in grades 6-8. In September 1993, there were approximately 300 students on the waiting list. The student body is 47 percent African American, 36 percent Hispanic, 11 percent white, 5 percent Asian, and 1 percent Native American. Approximately 75 percent of Timilty students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 23 percent have special educational needs.

Timilty's total staff numbers about 65. Acting as support staff for the teachers and students are several paraprofessionals, cluster leaders (sixth, seventh, and eighth grade clusters), a student support services coordinator, an administrative support specialist, an attendance monitor/specialty class coordinator, an evaluation team leader, a director of operations, and two guidance counselors. The principal, assistant principal, director of instruction, secretaries, cafeteria workers, and custodians round out the staff. It is the youngest middle school staff in the city, with more "provisional teachers" than at other schools. Nonetheless, almost two-thirds of the staff have advanced degrees.

As part of the transition to a Project Promise School, teaching faculty were given the option to transfer to another school. A fair number did leave, citing the extra two hours a day and three hours on Saturday as undesirable working conditions, despite the additional pay. Subsequently, the school was granted full autonomy in hiring, a decision that the staff agree is a key ingredient in the school's successful operation. A Faculty Screening Committee interviews all applicants and makes recommendations to the principal. The result is teachers that are there because they want to be. "I have never worked with more dedicated teachers," said the principal, "because they have bought into the program. Also, the self-esteem of the teachers is higher because they have been selected through a competitive process." Indeed, Timilty teachers express pride in their work and are very articulate about their teaching philosophies and classroom practices.

Timilty Middle School is currently organized into three teams, or clusters, each with 120 to 230 students.[1] The teams are organized by grade. Two common planning periods a day help the teachers within each cluster develop interdisciplinary themes, plan weekly instruction, and assess individual student progress. Team teaching is encouraged and, according to the faculty, has proven to be especially effective in mainstreaming special education, limited English proficient, and bilingual students.

Cluster leaders don't teach, as they do at other schools. Because of Timilty's full-court press to reach out to the community, continue developing new and innovative curricula, and facilitate classroom instruction, the faculty has decided that cluster teachers should be free during the school day and not have permanent teaching assignments (although they do some tutoring of individual students as needed). The cluster leaders' main duties are to facilitate curriculum development and interdisciplinary lesson planning, organize special activities such as internships and fieldtrips, handle discipline concerns, maintain daily contact with parents, and serve as their cluster's link to the school's Administrative Team.

The Administrative Team was established to facilitate the smooth operation of the school's programs. At each meeting, 11 faculty members plough through a full agenda to ensure they discuss all matters, air concerns, make the necessary decisions, assign tasks, and adjourn within an hour. Responsibility for chairing the meeting rotates among the team members, as does the responsibility for taking, typing, and distributing notes. Cluster leaders convey the team's decisions and requests for teacher input on future decisions to teachers immediately after the meeting.

## The Nature of the Innovation

Extended time is the primary vehicle to keep the promise of higher student achievement at Timilty Middle School, and it is the quantity-of-time innovation that landed Timilty on our list of study sites. As faculty began to work through the implications of adding more time, they quickly realized the potential for using that time in very different ways. In this section, we discuss the key characteristics and the design and implementation issues associated with both the quantity- and quality-of-time reforms at Timilty Middle School.

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[1] Prior to 1993-94, Timilty had a fourth cluster that was multi-level and included all limited English proficient students. These students are now integrated into the three grade-level clusters.

## Key Characteristics

***Extended day for students.*** Timilty students attend a regular six-hour school day on Friday; however, they spend 7.5 hours in school Monday through Thursday, or 1.5 hours longer than the district's other middle school students. The extra time comprises two supplementary class periods, one each in reading and math. The additional time amounts to the equivalent of 36 extra days a year. The increased time permits greater concentration on academic subjects. Students receive instruction in reading and math for 60 to 120 minutes each day, more than double the traditional time devoted to these subjects.

A curriculum based on interdisciplinary themes is designed to integrate reading, writing, and mathematics across the curriculum. In accordance with the integrated language arts thrust, writing is taught in every subject. More than 60 compositions are drafted, peer edited, rewritten, and critiqued by each student during the year. Students practice the steps of the writing process daily and maintain writing folders in all subjects. A study skills program reinforces academic work and prepares students for high school. For two periods each day, students attend specialty classes in two of the following areas: home economics, industrial arts, physical education, Spanish, critical thinking, health & life skills, music, fine arts, and dramatic arts.

***Summer school.*** Summer school has three components: City Summer, the Summer Transitional Program, and the Timilty Community Service Program. City Summer offers three to four hours of academic instruction, fieldtrips to local sites of interest and educational value, and recreation for roughly 20 students who need extra help. The Summer Transitional Program is for rising sixth graders (approximately 100) who will attend Timilty for the first time in the coming school year. The summer program orients them to the rigors of Project Promise in order to minimize the shock that awaits them in the fall when they have 90 extra minutes of school four days a week and more homework than their friends who attend other middle schools. The Timilty Community Service Program provides employment--in the form of public service at Timilty and several other community organizations--for approximately 12 students.

***Extended faculty planning time.*** In addition to restructuring student time, a pivotal aspect of Project Promise is the restructuring of teachers' time. Teachers work Monday through Friday from 7:25 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Friday afternoons from 1:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. are set aside for professional development and common planning. Faculty are paid extra ($5,000 to $10,000 a year) for the additional work time. Two common planning periods a day help the teachers within each cluster develop interdisciplinary themes, plan weekly instruction, and assess individual student progress. Team teaching is encouraged and, according to the faculty, has proven to be especially effective with mainstreaming special education students; for example, two teachers--one with special education training--team teach a language arts class.

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***Full-time outreach professionals***. Timilty faculty and administrators argue that community outreach can't be done well by teachers in their spare time. Effective outreach requires professionals who are free to communicate with parents, businesses, and community agencies during the day (when teachers are teaching), by telephone or by leaving the building to attend a meeting. Thus, Timilty employs a full-time community outreach worker who is a professional educator. The position of Administrative Support Specialist was created by a district-level administrator who was instrumental in writing the district's Plan for Excellence in Education. The outreach worker oversees the special programs listed below. She also assists the cluster leaders and teachers in making daily telephone calls to parents concerning their children's attendance, academic achievement, and behavior.

A handful of the types of community linkages that Timilty has achieved through its outreach staff are described here.

- The ***Lauriol College Collaborative*** is an innovative clinical model for faculty development that is designed to improve educational opportunities for both students and teachers in urban middle schools. Faculty view the collaborative, which was begun in 1989, as a natural extension of Project Promise. Veteran Timilty teachers work as full partners with college faculty to: (1) restructure the college's teacher preparation curriculum and to provide a mentor/clinical experience for teacher interns; (2) restructure middle schools by providing a variety of alternative learning opportunities for students (e.g., cooperative learning, heterogenous grouping); (3) provide teachers with greater opportunity for professional growth and career enhancement (interdisciplinary and team teaching, adjunct faculty status at Lauriol college for mentor teachers); and (4) improve the education of special needs children by increasing mainstreaming and limiting "pull-out" remediation.

- The ***State Hospital Partnership***, a school-business partnership with the state hospital, offers Timilty students four exciting partnership programs. In the *Timilty Explorers Program*, 25 students go to the hospital one morning a week to shadow employees. The experience is intended to help students make connections between their studies and real-world jobs. The *Science Fair Mentor Program* links Timilty students interested in designing a science fair project with a mentor who can help them. The *Hospital Speakers Bureau* provides staff to talk with Timilty students about various career options in the health sciences. The *Health and Fitness Program* sponsors booths and hospital volunteers for Timilty's annual Health Fair.

- ***Promising Pals***, a pen-pal program begun in 1987-88, helps broaden the Timilty students' writing experiences. By 1989-90, 200 local leaders in business, politics, and education were "promising pals," corresponding with Timilty students. In 1993, every child in the school had a promising pal with whom to exchange letters, cards, and invitations through the mail. The program's culminating activity--a school-sponsored breakfast reception and formal recognition ceremony--has helped students and their pals forge closer relationships and plan informal outings, lunches, and workplace visits.

- ***Family Literacy Project.*** A "Barbara Bush Family Literacy Grant" was awarded to Timilty early in 1993 and used to expand the school's family literacy project. The project aims to (1) prevent the development of gang identification by creating opportunities for positive interactions among parents and children; (2) build support for the school and community by engaging families in group projects and neighborhood exploration; and (3) boost communication skills between parents and children through structured recreational activities.

## Design Issues

***Weekly professional development.*** From the beginning, Project Promise planners and school faculty have pointed to professional development--above and beyond the planning periods--as an essential component of the change process needed to successfully implement Project Promise. If teachers were going to learn how to integrate writing across the curriculum, for example, then they would need intensive staff development. In the first couple of years, Timilty worked very closely with a professor from a local college on teaching the writing process. Other staff development includes guest speakers, publishers' representatives, in-house presentations by faculty members, etc. The key, according to faculty, is that the professional development activities are always directly linked to instructional goals.

***Saturday class and faculty burnout.*** The original Project Promise model included school-based activities on Saturday mornings during the school year. During its first four years as a Project Promise school, Timilty ran Saturday classes from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Although student participation was voluntary, Saturday attendance averaged 60 to 65 percent of the student body. The Saturday program was discontinued in 1990-91 because of district budget cuts. But, the Student Support Services coordinator admitted that Saturday school, despite its tremendous benefits, had some drawbacks as well. "Anything that's new has high energy. [The Saturday School] was great, but after four years of it, you were exhausted. Plus, we had no extra money for anything but the teacher salaries. Now we have a bit more freedom to buy special materials and take fieldtrips."

## Implementation Issues

***Defining new faculty roles and responsibilities.*** Teachers at Timilty originally resisted the concept of "more time on task," according to the Student Support Services Coordinator. They saw it as a managerial issue, not an instructional concern. During a summer planning session in 1986--before the first full year of implementation--"the teachers hemmed and hawed, mostly over questions of identity, what their new roles would be. Who would lead? What was a cluster coordinator and how would he or she relate to the other teachers in the cluster?" The issue of hierarchy was a particular sticking point. Teachers wanted to know if the cluster leader would be their supervisor. Out of the discussion emerged a clear picture of the "cluster leader," as a coordinator, a peer of classroom teachers who would coordinate activities, communications, and other operations for the cluster. Cluster leaders would continue to belong to the teachers' union and be recognized as a type of master teacher by the district, not part of administration; nonetheless, cluster leaders would assume a quasi-administrative function in the Project Promise schools.

***Scheduling***. Scheduling is a perennial challenge. Timilty faculty found through experience that scheduling all specialty classes first is the key to efficient and satisfactory course scheduling. There must be enough specialty classes--and adequate space to run them--to serve all the students in a given cluster at the same time, twice a day, thus simultaneously freeing all of the teachers in each cluster.

***Transportation***. Every year Timilty has to fight for special pupil transportation arrangements, despite the fact that such arrangements were part of the original Project Promise design. Timilty requires two late buses to take students home after they participate in extracurricular activities such as dances, computer club or basketball, track, and "double dutch" jump rope practice.

## Impacts and Outcomes

Project Promise set out to do one thing: improve student achievement. Every aspect of the program is focused on boosting the reading and math skills of Timilty students. Timilty documents its success in achieving this goal through longitudinal data, comparing student achievement each year to that of years past in terms of conventional outcomes such as standardized test scores, numbers of students admitted to local schools with very competitive entrance examinations ("exam schools"), average daily attendance rates of teachers and students, incidence of disciplinary referrals, and suspension rates. All show improvement between 1987 and 1993.

***Effects on student achievement***. In 1986-87, the first full year that Project Promise was implemented, Timilty students performed poorly on measures of academic achievement, behavior, and attitude. Three, five, and seven years later, the numbers showed improvements (Table 1). The percentage of students failing the state's basic skills test in mathematics dropped from 23 percent in 1986-87 to 10 percent in 1988-89 (the last year the test was administered). During the same period, the percentage of students who failed the state reading test dropped from 37 percent to 18 percent. The number of students who gain admission to "exam schools" each year has more than tripled, reaching the highest of all middle schools in the district, according to the principal. In addition, the students' average daily attendance has increased, and rates of nonpromotion, suspension, and tardiness have all declined.

***School and classroom level effects.*** The most profound school-level effects, according to the Student Support Services Coordinator, have to do with "restructured relationships among teachers and between teachers and students." Teachers are in constant contact with the support staff assigned to their cluster. The Student Support Coordinator says that over the seven years that Project Promise has been implemented at Timilty, she has seen teachers use their time differently. They had to learn how to take control of their cluster meeting time, but they have done so successfully. As a result, they are more motivated, more engaged in solving problems because they recognize problemsolving as their responsibility. For example, teachers have the freedom to group students (e.g., borrow students from another grade to get a more diverse group for a particular lesson or special project) or rearrange time for instruction by "borrowing" time from another class in the cluster. No longer are teaching and teachers' imaginations bounded by a rigid schedule and intransigent notions about what constitutes a class. Teachers have to share more because they plan thematic units together. What teachers do in their class affects the whole cluster. Their relationships are much more interdependent.

The Student Support Coordinator points out that teachers' relationships with students have also been transformed. Over the years, teachers have gradually stopped seeing students solely in terms of how they behave and perform in a single class. Cluster meetings and the flexible instructional opportunities, including Saturday school, have prompted teachers to understand that all of the students' school experiences need to be integrated. Teachers now tend to relate to the students as human beings who are trying to understand the world, rather than as "my eighth grade math students."

Timilty's Attendance Coordinator claims that increased grant activity at Timilty is a result of teacher empowerment. However, he scoffed at the fact that the district office still administers all grants to schools, despite its push for school-based management.

# Table 1
## Measures of Student Achievement in the First, Third, Fifth, and Seventh Years of Project Promise Implementation

| Measure | 1986-87 (1st yr) | 1988-89 (3rd yr) | 1990-91 (5th yr) | 1992-93 (7th yr) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percent of students failing the State Basic Skills Test in math | 23% | 10% | The state did not administer the state assessment these years. | |
| Percent of students failing the State Basic Skills Test in reading | 37% | 18% | " | " |
| Nonpromotion rate | 10% | 4% | 3% | 3% |
| Number of suspensions | 83 | 30 | 11 | 7 |
| Number of students who gained admission to "exam schools" | 39 | NA | 87 | 128 |
| Average daily attendance (students) | 84% | 91% | 92% | 91% |
| Average daily attendance (teachers) | NA | 99% | 96% | 97% |
| Number of students tardy/day | 60 | < 20 | < 20 | < 18 |

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SOURCES: 1990-91 district report for Timilty Middle School; Nomination Package for 1988-89 Secondary School Recognition Program

***Community support***. Many faculty members say that community support for Timilty has grown since the inception of Project Promise. The parents are thrilled to have their children productively engaged at school rather than languishing at home watching television or, worse yet, wandering around the streets.

## Resources

Funding has always been an uphill battle for Project Promise schools, including Timilty. It is an expensive program, running roughly $9,000 more per year for each teacher and somewhat less for other staff members (plus base salaries, materials, and overhead for the three-hour Saturday program, when it was operational). Originally, the superintendent used state desegregation monies to fund Project Promise. When the state reduced the district's allocation, the district decided to pass the cuts on to the Project Promise schools. That's when the other two Project Promise schools met their demise, according to Timilty's principal. When asked, the budget office claimed to be making cuts solely on the basis of dollars, without regard to school effectiveness. Timilty's principal was able to convince the interim superintendent to find money in the city budget to adequately fund Timilty only after threatening to publicize to the newspapers the unjustness of cutting funds to such a highly effective school.

In 1989-90, Timilty became a citywide magnet school. It was forced to drop its Saturday school and raise class size as a result of cutbacks. In 1987-88, Timilty's enrollment was 440 students and the average class size was 17. In 1989-90, the current principal's first year at Timilty, enrollment jumped to 640 and the average class size to 28 students. The new principal fought hard that year to exact a commitment from the central office to cap Timilty's enrollment at 530, which would have brought the average class size down to 22 (the district average was 29). "But, I have to remind the central office annually of their promise," the principal says. In the 1992-93 school year, Timilty was overassigned 33 students, bringing the total enrollment up to 563.

Mounting fiscal constraints do not bode well for Timilty. Furthermore, certain provisions of the state Education Reform package could affect the school's extended-day program in as yet unknown ways. For example, Timilty could get caught in the crossfire if the state requires a longer working day without extra pay. Compensation for the extended day at Timilty is the single most important symbol, according to teachers, of the district's commitment to high-quality education. "Giving us the extra time and money to help our students learn says to us that the district values what teachers do and is willing to pay for it," explained the Attendance and Specialty Class Coordinator. Writing extra time into the teachers' contract without extra pay would likely draw the ire of the Union and could jeopardize Timilty's extended-day program and undermine staff morale and commitment.

# WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Overview and Context

Wheeler Elementary School, located in Louisville Kentucky, serves approximately 500 students in grades K-5. Nearly 68 percent of the students are white, 29 percent are African American, and the remaining three percent are Asian, American Indian, and Hispanic. In 1975, as a result of a desegregation order, Wheeler and the other city schools merged with the surrounding county school district. This new district is one of the 30 largest school districts in the nation, serving roughly 92,000 students.

Wheeler was selected as a site for the Uses of Time study on the basis of its reforms in the quality of the time that students spend in school. At Wheeler, a number of innovative approaches to improve the quality of both educational instruction and school management have been implemented as a result of the school's partnership with the Gheens Professional Development Academy. Wheeler's staff chose to participate in the academy first by voting to engage in professional development and later by voting to experiment with participatory management. In an effort to increase the instructional and planning time for teachers, and the effective learning time for students, Wheeler's primary educational reform has included the adoption of multi-age, multi-ability student groupings, the formation of teaching teams, and the development of instructional activities based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. In order to execute these ideas, the staff revamped the curriculum and created new teaching strategies. The teachers adopted thematic instruction and integrated the disciplines in order to provide the students with a more comprehensive education and teach to different ability levels. Wheeler has also experimented with innovative approaches to student assessment. The school has been developing portfolio assessments and a new student progress report.

The changes at Wheeler are now embedded in the Kentucky Education Reform Act, which is perhaps the most sweeping reform initiative in the country. In 1989, the state's Supreme Court declared the public school system unconstitutional, and, prompted by the court's decision, the state legislature embarked on a five-year plan to develop a more equitable and effective school system. At Wheeler, several of the new state requirements, such as nongraded primary schools and school-based decisionmaking, were already being implemented. For the most part, the staff at Wheeler view the new act as affirming their practices.

## The Nature of the Innovation

### Key Characteristics

***Multi-age, multi-ability groups.*** Students at Wheeler Elementary have been divided into five groups consisting of approximately 110 students and four teachers. By eliminating traditional grade labels and ability tracking, the new structure is intended to break the lockstep cycle of American education and give students broader timeframes in which to learn without confronting annual failure. Team teaching encourages teacher specialization, alleviates teacher isolation, and pools teachers' talents. The teaming concept allows and requires both increased coordination and collaboration among teachers.

There are three primary teams, each containing students who would traditionally be identified as first through third grade students, and two intermediate teams with students traditionally recognized as fourth and fifth graders. One of the primary teams serves kindergarten students, and another is teamed with the classroom for severely emotionally disturbed children, bringing a fifth teacher to the team.

***Thematic units.*** The teams organize their instruction into thematic units instead of the more traditional units of progressive skills development. This approach helps to keep the activities of the different sections of the team relevant to one another. In addition, it enables the teachers to address different skill levels while working on the same topic. For example, in one primary team, the students were studying the rainforest. The younger students were drawing pictures of animals for a mural while the older students were writing stories based on the rainforest.

***Multiple intelligences.*** The staff of Wheeler Elementary have also concentrated on recognizing, validating, and developing the different learning styles and intelligences of each child. In accord with Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, the school has instituted a "Strategy Room" where the students participate in activities directed toward developing their different strengths. During this time students are able to explore individual interests not necessarily tapped by the typical school curriculum. The program also allows teachers to naturally bring cultural diversity into the classroom and help students appreciate the different artistic styles, music, and heritages of our heterogeneous society.

***Learning Connections.*** On Fridays, the students leave their team groupings to choose a "Learning Connection" activity. Various activities derived from the multiple intelligences theory are offered with selections made by students. Thematic projects and activities provide an opportunity for the application and extension of basic skills. Students have the opportunity to mix with other teams. Because these activities are offered by itinerant teachers, as well as classroom teachers on a rotating basis, they also provide an opportunity for teachers outside of the team to provide insights on student progress.

***Experimental assessments.*** Just as the multi-age teams were developed to allow instruction to more naturally follow a student's development, the staff at Wheeler have struggled to create reports and assessments that constructively document student progress. Wheeler has abandoned traditional letter grades and adopted a report based on student progress. This new system is intended to be more "narrative in scope," using R for rapid progress, S for steady or satisfactory progress, and PH for progress with help. In addition, checks or pluses are given for participation and social development. The teams are experimenting with a number of authentic assessments including math and writing portfolios and video assessments.

## Design Issues

***Origins of the reform effort.*** The changes made at Wheeler did not emerge from the need to turn a failing school around. The school had a good reputation, decent test scores, high attendance rates, and a supportive community. However, staff morale was quite low.

The reform effort at Wheeler began in earnest when, in 1985, the staff voted to join 13 other district schools in becoming Professional Development Schools working collaboratively with the Gheens Academy jointly supported by the district and a local foundation. As a Professional Development School Wheeler was committed to reviewing research and finding "better ways for teachers to teach and students to learn." Two teachers from Wheeler went to the academy once a month to review research and bring their findings back to their colleagues. According to the school's staff, lots of "powerful discussions" took place. The academy also sponsored teacher travel to conferences. This process went on for two-years, during which time the principal also attended a course at Harvard on Howard Gardner's "multiple intelligences." At the end of the two-year period, Wheeler staff had decided to implement recommendations for developmentally appropriate practices set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children as well as Gardner's principles of "multiple intelligences".

Teacher teaming came as a logical adjunct to the main thrust of Wheeler's reform effort to provide students with a more developmentally appropriate education, but it was an innovation in its own right because many teachers were initially doubtful about the proposed reforms to curriculum and instruction and feared sharing their teaching with colleagues. The primary opposition to undertaking the reform initiative came from teachers: Before the changes could be made, they had to be thoroughly convinced by the principal that they had nothing to lose by taking action.

A major goal of the multi-age, multi-ability, team system is to lessen the number of opportunities for students to "fail" academically. Adhering to the creed, "Expecting the Best . . . Producing Success", teachers at Wheeler Elementary help students discover their individual learning techniques and individual needs. The teachers at Wheeler believe that if students have the same teacher for at least two years, fewer students will fail. The structure of the multi-age teams provides students with the opportunity to work on tasks at their own pace, allowing each individual the opportunity to develop academically and emotionally. The school seeks to assess what skills each student has acquired and what skills need to be developed.

***Professional planning time.*** In order to allow for coordination within the teams, teachers are provided daily common planning periods--45 minutes for primary teachers and 35 for intermediate teachers. (These amounts of time represent a 5-minute increase in daily planning time for each group instituted in 1992-93.) "Itinerant" teachers (usually the specialty teachers assigned to the school) cover the classes during this time. Once a week, the common planning period is used for an official team meeting. During one such meeting that we observed, teachers planned and discussed activities for the team's next thematic unit. They also discussed individual students and groupings, exploring different student-teacher arrangements in order to better meet the needs of their students. The "Learning Connection" time on Friday provides an additional planning time for the teachers who are not offering an activity. This is also a time when primary and intermediate teams can meet and discuss cross-team activities.

***Site-based management.*** In 1987, the staff of Wheeler voted to take a further step in reforming their school by becoming involved in the Professional Development Academy's Participatory Management Pilot. Participatory Management Schools are provided on-site technical assistance in designing and implementing the shared decisionmaking model. Training opportunities--including workshops on consensus decisionmaking, communication, holding effective meetings, problem identification and solution, leadership, and conflict resolution--were provided by the Academy. A Restructuring Team (the principal and two teachers) received special training to act as on-site facilitators. The Academy provided monthly training sessions for administrators, teachers, and parents to share challenges and concerns.

Wheeler is now managed by a participatory management team that oversees almost all of the school policy decisions including budget, hiring, and scheduling. The management team consists of school administrators, teachers, and parents. In addition to those on the Steering Committee, others serve on committees covering topics such as instruction/assessment, staff development/inservice, school climate, and scheduling. Participatory management decisions are made by committee consensus. Important decisions are then approved by the Steering Committee.

## Implementation Issues

***Leadership.*** Leadership has played a major role in the success of the reform effort at Wheeler. Teachers were initially very skeptical about change. They expressed concerns over spending a lot of time on "just another educational fad" and also feared that the teaching teams would interfere with the way in which each individual teacher taught. As one teacher put it, "The classroom is sacrosanct. We were afraid to share it with the team . . . afraid of conflict . . . afraid of an unequal load." To overcome this reluctance, the Board of Education, the district superintendent, and the building principal encouraged the school staff to take risks, basically offering them a "hold harmless" provision during the early years of their efforts. The superintendent and other officials demonstrated this support by assuring that no one would be punished if they took a chance and made a mistake.

Reaching a comfort zone with the idea of participatory management was particularly difficult for teachers who initially viewed their professional role as a narrow range of tasks associated with classroom teaching. The principal's leadership and encouragement were important in helping the staff overcome this barrier. She continued to push the reform and countered teachers' concerns by asking them to "reach inside and find their last bit of idealism." Her agreement with the staff was that if they tried new ways of doing things and were unhappy with the outcomes after a year, they could stop with no resistance from her.

***Classroom teams.*** The first two multi-age pilot teams were formed at Wheeler in 1987. One was a "primary team" of four teachers and 82 students who would traditionally be identified as first and second graders. The other team was an intermediate team containing students formerly labeled as fourth and fifth graders. The primary team was expanded to include third graders in the following year. At the present time, all students and teachers are assigned to one of a total of five teams.

Because the teams have shared lessons learned about teaming, there are similarities among them with regard to the division of activities and the schedule of teaching periods. However, each team takes a slightly different approach. The available instructional time is used very flexibly. Teams are free to design their own schedules, curriculum, and assessment strategies. This autonomy provides much greater flexibility in the use of instructional time than is the norm in American classrooms. For example, after some experimentation, some of the primary teams decided that moving students around frequently to different classrooms resulted in too much lost instructional time; other teams, however, remain convinced that the younger students benefit from the movement associated with changing classrooms.

Each year, the teachers have tried new instructional innovations, sometimes because of lessons learned in the previous year and sometimes because of changing conditions in the school. Because each team followed a slightly different evolution, it is difficult to attribute all of the changes to the team approach.

However, some general trends can be seen. The teams have generally been able to take on a larger scope of responsibilities and saved each other time by sharing more of their lessons. The configuration of the curriculum within the blocks of time has been adjusted as teachers gained experience with flexible time. For example, in the fourth year of the innovation, one team switched from having two blocks of reading, social studies, and language arts and two blocks of math and science to a single long block for reading, social studies, and language arts and two blocks of math and science.

In the first years of their classroom reform efforts, most teachers at Wheeler continued to rely on textbooks as the primary materials of instruction. However, as their teaming and grouping innovations matured, they found texts to be less and less appropriate. The books did not fit well with the developmental philosophy that they had embraced or the fact that children often remained with a group for multiple years. Teachers began to generate their own materials, which are routinely shared among the teams.

***Architecture.*** One fortuitous factor that has contributed to the success of multi-age teaming at Wheeler is the architecture of the building. The school is built in a circle around the library and the cafeteria, with pods radiating out. This construction provides coves that open into four classrooms at the end of each hallway. Every team except one has its own cove, providing a convenient, self-contained space for all team activities.

***State and union regulations.*** As the innovations at Wheeler have unfolded, the principal and staff have had to be aware of various state and union regulations. For example, the union contract mandates a certain number of staff development minutes for each teacher, and the state mandates precise minutes of instruction for different subjects. However, because the district strongly supported the innovative efforts at the school, the staff has not felt particularly constrained by these kinds of potential restrictions on their activities.

A larger concern has been the union-controlled system of staffing schools in the district. According to the union contract, teachers are recruited, selected, and distributed at the district level. Schools are not free to hire their own staff from outside of the system. Wheeler has addressed this barrier by actively recruiting suitable transfers from other schools within the system and by strongly discouraging teachers who do not seem interested or suited to the school's new philosophy. A few teachers who were uncomfortable with the innovations have been "helped" to transfer out. Over time, this becomes less of an issue as teachers throughout the district gain a better understanding of what it means to work at Wheeler and can judge whether it would suit them.

## Impacts and Outcomes

School personnel reported that no rigorous evaluation had been conducted on student outcomes as a result of the school's reform efforts. However, positive outcomes cited in publications about the school include the following:

- Students take responsibility for their own learning at an earlier stage
- Student attendance has increased
- Student achievement has increased, as measured by interim progress reports and daily student work
- Disciplinary referrals have decreased
- Parental satisfaction with the school has increased, based on conferences, conversations, written correspondence, and levels of parent involvement
- Teachers observe differences in student motivation and enthusiasm for attending school

In terms of their own professional lives, teachers at Wheeler reported that the reform effort had contributed to professional development because of the family atmosphere and a cooperative rather than competitive atmosphere. Many found that teaming made teaching easier. Professional time became less focused on grading, seatwork, and monitoring in favor of joint planning and organization of instruction. There was no increase in time, but the quality of it was different. As one teacher put it, "It's more fun."

The staff at Wheeler have also enjoyed the recognition of the education community. The principal has encouraged teachers to present their experiences at conferences. Many of the teachers acted as instructors in the workshops offered by the Professional Development Academy. In addition, they mentioned visits from other researchers such as Howard Gardner, being selected as a federally recognized Blue Ribbon School, and participating in research projects.

## Resources

For the most part, planning and implementation of the reforms undertaken at Wheeler have been accomplished within the regular budget for elementary schools in the district. The current expenditure per pupil was $4,228 in 1990-1991.

The primary extra resource available to the school was the district and foundation-funded Professional Development Academy. The Academy has matured tremendously from a small planning and development operation in 1985 to a large, complex organization with several divisions. Expanding from a $400,000 annual budget with more than 90 percent of its funding coming from the local foundation during its first two years, the Academy presently has a budget of approximately $10 million dollars (exclusive of federal grants) with less than 10 percent provided by the foundation. The school system now provides more than 75 percent of the budget, which has required a significant reallocation of district funds.

In the early days of the reform effort, two teachers from Wheeler attended the Academy once a month, which provided the staff rich, subsidized professional development opportunities. The Academy has also supported staff travel to conferences.

Many teachers at Wheeler cite enlightened leadership as the most important requirement for initiating real school restructuring efforts. The clear message from the district and the building principal that "You will not be punished if you make a mistake" was a very important "resource" in encouraging the staff to experiment.

As the innovation has matured, teachers report that "time" has become less of an issue. Common planning time--carved out of existing time--is adequate, and teachers actually save each other time by sharing curriculum and effective instructional strategies. The teachers found that the innovation changed the way they spend their time. Overall, the quantity of time remains comparable, but the nature of the time is quite different: it's more fun."

A lighthouse school in the state, Wheeler Elementary School is on the cutting edge of reform. Staff commitment to the innovative efforts have been solidified by the recognition they have received and the opportunities they have been given to share their experiences with local, state, regional, and national audiences.